POLLYANNA *of the* ORANGE BLOSSOMS

(TRADE MARK)

by HARRIET LUMMIS SMITH

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Miss Catherine Eberlin
Dec 25- 1928
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Pollyanna

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POLLYANNA

(TRADEMARK)

of the

Orange Blossoms

By HARRIET LUMMIS SMITH

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POLLYANNA OF THE ORANGE BLOSSOMS

CHAPTER I

WHEN THE GAME PLAYED ITSELF

POLLYANNA laid down her pen and rubbed her aching wrist. According to the calendar it was the second day of June, but the thermometer told a different story. The dining-room in which Pollyanna and Jimmy were sitting was the coolest spot in the house, but even here the heat had the sticky oppressiveness of dog-days. Through the bay window Pollyanna could see that the morning-glories, which had been so up-and-coming at breakfast time, now drooped their leaves dejectedly. They made her think of a dog with his tail between his legs.

Pollyanna sat on one side of the dining-table, and Jimmy on the other. The ends of the table were occupied by boxes of stationery, piled one upon another, in glistening white columns. It was

Jimmy who said that they reminded him of marble tombs, and Pollyanna had frowned, and then crossed a *t* with a slashing stroke, intended to emphasize her disapproval.

The white boxes contained wedding announcements. Those on Pollyanna's right held the announcements already addressed; those on the left were awaiting their turn. And the only way Pollyanna could write legibly was by fixing her attention desperately on each letter as she formed it, and completely dismissing from her thoughts the astonishing disclosure contained in those blank, bland envelopes.

"Mrs. Thomas Chilton announces the marriage of her niece ——" Every time Pollyanna reached this point she was overwhelmed by a sense of unreality. Of course there was nothing extraordinary about wedding anouncements. They were among the things to be expected, especially in June, and though they always looked interesting when one took them from the postman, and Pollyanna dearly loved to be the first to open them, they had never before impressed her as thrilling. But she had not yet been able to read this particular announcement without feeling the queerest little shiver running along her spine. It was astonishing what a difference it made when Mrs. Thomas Chilton was an-

nouncing the marriage of her niece, Miss Pollyanna Whittier to Mr. James Pendleton.

Pollyanna had protested against the wedding announcements on the score of expense. "You see it's not a bit necessary, Aunt Polly," she had said. "Of course everybody in Beldingsville will know about it, and we can write to the people who live somewhere else, if we especially want them to know. And the other folks are bound to find it out, sooner or later."

Aunt Polly had really seemed displeased. "What an extraordinary girl you are, Pollyanna. As if the marriage of the only descendant of the Harringtons was a matter of no importance!"

"I only thought those cards were so terrifically expensive, Aunt Polly; and I hate to have you scrimping, and making your head ache, trying to squeeze out dollars that aren't there to squeeze. But, if we must have announcements for the honor of the family, why then we must. I suppose they would be lots cheaper if they were printed instead of engraved, wouldn't they?"

"Printed!" Aunt Polly fell back in her chair, with a despairing gesture. "Pollyanna, sometimes I feel as if I'd made a failure of your bringing up. There are some things you seem as incapable of comprehending as when you were a child. Please

understand that I would rather live on bread and water the rest of my days than not have you married in the style that befits your station."

Accordingly the dining-table was piled with stationer's boxes that warm June day, and Pollyanna was rubbing her wrist. Jimmy, finishing an address with a flourish, looked across the table to smile at her.

"We'll be thoroughly advertised when these go out, young woman. Every human being who has ever heard the name of either of us will be informed of our rash step."

The vagueness of Pollyanna's answering smile indicated that her thoughts were elsewhere.

"Jimmy, if I were going to write a book, it would be different from most of the ones I've read."

Across the table Jimmy's eyes danced mischievously. "Are you planning to take up a literary career again, Miss Whittier?"

Pollyanna laughed. Long before this she had told Jimmy of the stories that had been typed so carefully, the stories that were meant to win prizes, and then had worn out, travelling from editor to editor, and coming back every time, like homing pigeons. She did not mind in the least Jimmy's teasing air. Indeed, she experienced a curious satisfaction in his frequent lapses from the lover to the

tease. Jimmy, the lover, was still to Pollyanna a glorious stranger, a young archangel, whose arms about her lifted her to a heaven of tremulous ecstasy. But there is something reassuring, too, in feeling the solid earth under one's feet, and, when Jimmy teased her, he was so like the freckled lad with whom she had played and quarreled and whose champion she had been when he had no other friend, that it gave her a satisfying sense of home-coming. Dearly as Pollyanna loved this wonderful new Jimmy, it would have broken her heart to have parted altogether from the mischievous, teasing Jimmy she had known so long.

"I may take up literary work again," she replied with extreme dignity, "and I may not. I haven't quite decided how I shall use the time when I'm not getting your meals or darning your socks. But, if I decide to write a book, Jimmy, it will be unlike most books in one very important respect. Most of them, you know, wind up with a wedding, as if that were the end of things. And, Jimmy, it's the other way about. It's just beginning — the beginning of everything."

"You dear!" Jimmy said a little huskily.

Jimmy, the tease, had mysteriously vanished, and Jimmy, the archangel, had taken his place. He came around the table, put his arm about her shoul-

der, and bent his head till his cheek touched hers. Both of them had completely forgotten the business of addressing the wedding announcements. But when at last he kissed her, Jimmy gave a little start, for Pollyanna's eyes were wet.

"Pollyanna! What is it, darling? You're not crying!"

"Just because I'm so happy. Jimmy, isn't it wonderful to be so glad that you don't have to think of the reason why you ought to be!"

"I've got reason enough to last me all my life," the young man asserted. "I've got you."

He sat down on the edge of her chair presently, his arm still about her, and made his voice as business-like as possible under the rather distracting circumstances. "Pollyanna, there's a very important matter on which I want your opinion."

"Oh, very well." Following his example, Pollyanna, too, became tremendously businesslike.

"I had a talk with Uncle John to-day, — you might call it half a talk, for somebody interrupted us right in the middle. And, dear, for the present he wants to continue the allowance he's been making me ever since I entered college."

Pollyanna's ears and eyes were very keen where Jimmy was concerned. The note of distaste in her lover's voice, together with the upright crease

between his brows, quite prepared her for what was coming.

"I don't like the idea, Pollyanna. It's a bit hard to make it clear, but I suppose the explanation is that, ever since I was a little chap, I've been dependent on people on whom I didn't have the slightest claim, and I'm deadly sick of it."

"Mr. Pendleton —" Pollyanna was beginning, when Jimmy interrupted.

"Look here, little girl, you've got to call him Uncle John after the fifteenth, so you'd better be practising."

"Oh, all right! 'Uncle John,' then. I was just going to say that he wouldn't like to have you look at it that way. He feels that you belong to him."

"I know it, and I don't want to hurt his feelings; but, at the same time, I've been looking forward to taking care of you and myself on my own earnings. It isn't asking too much of you, is it, to be satisfied with what I can give you?"

"Asking too much! Oh, Jimmy!"

When Pollyanna looked up at him like that, there was only one possible thing for him to do, and Jimmy did it. After a long and rapturous interlude he remembered what he had been trying to tell her.

"I think I've got it figured out in a way that will be satisfactory all around. Uncle John's feelings

won't be hurt, I won't sacrifice my self-respect, and your aunt will be provided for. My idea is to take the allowance Uncle John gives me and turn it over to your Aunt Polly. We won't tell her what my salary is. We'll simply say that we can spare that amount easily, and your Aunt Polly will congratulate herself that her niece has married such a successful young engineer."

Pollyanna clapped her hands, as if she had not been an hour older than on the day she found him first, sitting dejectedly by the roadside.

"Jimmy, you have the most wonderful mind. Then Aunt Polly can stay on in this house, and everything will be perfect. I don't believe Aunt Polly would ever be quite happy in a little flat in a big city, — where no one had ever heard of the Harringtons!"

"Then that's settled." Jimmy drew a breath of relief. "And please understand, Miss Pollyanna Whittier, that I'm not asking you to share a poor man's lot all your days. I have every intention of becoming a millionaire."

Pollyanna rubbed her cheek against his sleeve. "I don't know but it would be nicer to share a poor man's lot than a millionaire's, if you come to that."

"It's not the money I care so much about," Jimmy explained. "Only, in my profession, mak-

ing money is a synonym for making a big success. I'll give you a chance to try both extremes, and then you can make up your mind which you prefer. And if you would really rather be poor, we'll give all the money away."

Pollyanna smiled delightedly at the fascinating prospect of giving away a million dollars, and then advanced an idea of her own. "Jimmy, I'm glad now that Aunt Polly lost part of her money, as long as we can make her perfectly comfortable. Only think what a splendid training I've had in being economical!"

Jimmy leaned over so that he could look into her eyes. "Still playing the game, aren't you, sweetheart."

Pollyanna gave him back his look. "Why, Jimmy, if I'd never heard of the glad game, I believe it would begin to play itself, because it seems as if everything was exactly the way I wanted it to be."

They sat for a long time thinking, planning, making little excursions into a future, bright with every color of the rainbow, and coming back to the present with the conviction that nothing could ever be better than this perfect moment. And, late in the afternoon, Aunt Polly walked in upon them.

"What a frightfully oppressive day!" sighed Aunt Polly, fanning herself with an energy that was

fatiguing to observe. "Oh, you have finished addressing the announcements, have you?"

Pollyanna's face flamed with conscious guilt. Jimmy looked down, to hide the irrepressible laughter in his eyes.

"No, we haven't really f-finished," gulped Pollyanna. "You see we had some rather important — important matters of b-business to talk over."

CHAPTER II

A RAINY WEDDING DAY

On the morning of June fifteenth, Beldingsville was wakened by the monotonous drip of rain. It was not a jolly spring shower, hurrying to get through its chore of washing up. The skies were leaden, with no hint of blue behind the sullen clouds. There were puddles in the streets, and the garden flowers bowed low under their load of rain-drops. At six o'clock Mrs. Chilton pattered into her niece's room.

"Pollyanna, it really seems a shame. Here, after two weeks of almost uninterrupted sunshine, you have a rainy wedding day."

Pollyanna beamed at her. "Well, Auntie, I'm glad it's cooler, anyway. And if it rains to-day, it's all the more likely to be pleasant while we're down at the shore."

Aunt Polly was not to be consoled so easily. "I'd planned to have the refreshments served on the lawn," she sighed. "But that's out of the question now, even if it stops raining, for the ground is soaked."

"Isn't it lucky that you've got such a splendid big house," exulted Pollyanna. "Just think if you hadn't any place to put the people."

Aunt Polly still persistently clung to her grievance. "There's something depressing about a rainy wedding day. Perhaps it's because of the proverb, 'Happy is the bride the sun shines on.'"

"I thought," Pollyanna exclaimed, "that it was, 'Happy is the bride the rain falls on.'"

"That isn't the way I remember it," objected Aunt Polly, and then she checked herself, smiling involuntarily in sympathy with Pollyanna's contagious laugh.

"It doesn't make a bit of difference, Aunt Polly. I'm going to invent a brand-new proverb on the spot, 'Happy is the bride who marries Jimmy, rain or shine!'"

In planning for her niece's wedding, Mrs. Chilton had disregarded Pollyanna's plea for economy, and had not even deemed it necessary to consult the girl's preferences. If a member of the Harrington family was to be married, certain things were obligatory, regardless of any other consideration. She had gone on making her arrangements, and telling herself that, after Pollyanna was gone, she herself could live on next to nothing. "I shall have to sell the place anyway," she reflected bitterly. "I can't keep

it up on my income." And then Pollyanna had come to her with the announcement that Jimmy had planned to send her a generous check every month, that Jimmy himself had suggested it.

"Pollyanna!" Mrs. Chilton had gasped. "But I can't accept it from you."

"But you *must* take it, Aunt Polly," Pollyanna insisted. "Think of all I owe you, and what a joy it is to pay back a little bit. If you refuse, Jimmy and I will be terribly upset," she ended truthfully.

"But you can't afford to give me any such amount — unless Jimmy's doing extraordinarily well."

"He *is* doing well, Aunt Polly, and this was all his own idea. So please don't make us both unhappy by objecting."

In the end Aunt Polly had been forced to yield, and her capitulation had been made easier by the reflection that now Pollyanna would have, in her own home, a refuge from the summer heat of the great city, where the two young folks were to start house-keeping. "She's always been such an outdoor child," she thought tenderly. And then she felt the prick of contrition under her happiness as she remembered her early opposition to Pollyanna's choice.

"It wasn't that I had any objection to the boy himself," she explained to her accusing conscience,

" but it stands to reason that a Harrington couldn't marry just anybody."

The knowledge that grinding economy would not be necessary after June fifteenth made no difference whatever in Mrs. Chilton's plans. But, as was natural, she went on with her preparations in quite a different spirit. As she gave orders to a city caterer regarding the wedding cake, and laid down the law to the local florist, she seemed more like her former self than at any time since her husband's death.

It was only to be expected that, in the community which so long before had learned the glad game, the rainy wedding day should be accepted as part of the fun. As six o'clock approached, mud-splashed vehicles, drawn by dripping horses, made their way along the muddy road which led to the old Harrington homestead. Automobiles glided to Mrs. Chilton's door, and chauffeurs held umbrellas over the alighting guests. Others, who had only their own feet to depend on, splashed along in overshoes and raincoats, their bobbing umbrellas giving the effect of a procession of toad-stools, and left a trail of laughter along their way. If Beldingsville had ever played the game, it was playing it that night.

Pollyanna had given in to her aunt in most things. She had submitted in the matter of the wedding

announcements. She had acquiesced, though not without protest, in giving the order for a wedding cake that looked like a frosted Eiffel Tower. She had yielded to Aunt Polly's determination to have a florist decorate the room, even while she had insisted that she and Jimmy could do it perfectly well with flowers from the garden. But in one thing Pollyanna had had her way. Her friends, regardless of their social standing, had been invited to attend her wedding.

"You see it's this way, Aunt Polly," Pollyanna had explained, her face a little anxious for fear that she might not make the matter quite clear, "I'm perfectly willing to have nobody but the two families, but, if we're going to ask outsiders, I really must have Nellie Mahoney and Mrs. Benton."

Aunt Polly bit the pencil with which she was writing her list. "Pollyanna, you are the queerest girl. I'm not saying a word against either of them. Mrs. Benton is a very estimable person, I've no doubt, and the Mahoney girl has been a devoted daughter; but to invite them on an occasion like this ——"

"Then we'll have just the families," interrupted Pollyanna brightly. "And there won't have to be so much wedding cake."

This did not please Aunt Polly, either. "We must

remember how such things will impress other people. Now Mrs. Carew — I mean Mrs. Pendleton — moves in the most exclusive society."

"I know she does," admitted Pollyanna. "But Aunt Ruth — Jimmy wants me to practise calling her that, so I won't stammer when the time comes — is the very one who likes people for what they are themselves. Why, Sadie, who is just like a daughter to her now, was a salesgirl, you know. I'd really like to have Aunt Ruth meet Nellie Mahoney," concluded Pollyanna. "She'd appreciate what a fine girl she is, in spite of some little peculiarities."

"Bad grammar and excruciating taste in dress, for instance?" suggested Aunt Polly grimly. And then when Pollyanna flushed, as if she personally had been criticized, the older woman experienced a reaction which, before she realized it, had carried her to the point of complete surrender.

And so, on Pollyanna's wedding night, the house was full of people, many of whom would have forded rivers to be present, to say nothing of splashing through brimming gutters. There were more wet rain-coats and dripping umbrellas and muddy overshoes upstairs than had ever, in all probability, been collected under one roof in Beldingsville since the town was founded; but downstairs were light and laughter and happy faces. It was generally under-

stood that there were to be no tears at Pollyanna's wedding.

John Pendleton was to give the bride away, and the Rev. Paul Ford was to perform the marriage ceremony, and to both men the occasion brought back many tender memories. The minister recalled the little girl who with such unconsciousness had opened his eyes to the importance of the "rejoicing texts," and had thereby saved his ministry from failure. "Every parish needs a Pollyanna," he had said a great many times, and it would have been hard to find anyone in Beldingsville to disagree with him.

As for John Pendleton, when he looked back on the morose, embittered man who had shut the world out of his home and his heart alike, he found it hard to believe that the John Pendleton to whose rescue Pollyanna had come that far-off day, in Pendleton Woods, had really been himself. "I'd have been grateful to one who'd merely saved my life," thought the man as he went up the stairs, for the little bride; "but Pollyanna made my life worth while."

She was waiting for him in her white dress, with the veil on which Aunt Polly had insisted, and with a wreath of orange blossoms over her soft hair. John Pendleton stood for a minute looking down on her, and such a lump came up in his throat that

he had to make several efforts to swallow it before he could speak her name.

"Pollyanna, you're the loveliest bride I've ever seen."

"Oh, Uncle John!"

It was the first time she had ever called him that, and he felt the lump again. So, instead of bothering to speak, he simply stooped and kissed her.

"I'm afraid I don't feel quite like a bride," said Pollyanna, putting her hand through his arm. "So many of them look as if they were scared, you know, and I'm so happy that it almost chokes me. But, of course," ended Pollyanna, reasonably, an unmistakable sympathy blending with her explanatory tone, "none of the others were marrying Jimmy."

Pollyanna was rather astonished to find it so soon over. After the months and months she had spent taking infinitesimal stitches on innumerable garments, — for Aunt Polly had old-fashioned ideas regarding a trousseau — after the hours of directing wedding announcements, and the days given to setting the house in order, till there was not a remote corner of the garret that was not absolutely spick and span, as if every wedding guest would bring a search warrant, entitling him to make an exhaustive examination of the premises, it was almost disconcert-

ing to have the minister, after two or three minutes, addressing her as Mrs. Pendleton, and wishing her joy.

If there is anything in good wishes, no young couple ever started life with a more complete equipment. In the anxious time that followed Aunt Polly's losses, Pollyanna had been cheered and strengthened by having some of her friends tell her what she had meant to them, and, in her hour of supreme happiness, their tributes filled her cup till it overflowed.

A full heart is likely to relieve itself by tears, and Pollyanna might have set a bad example by crying at her own wedding, if old Mrs. Tibbetts had not created a diversion. Mrs. Tibbetts had become so deaf that, when she once set out to say something, there was no stopping her. The only thing possible was to listen till she had quite finished.

When she had kissed Pollyanna, Mrs. Tibbetts regarded Jimmy with almost fierce attention. "I want to take a look at the young feller who thinks he's good enough for Pollyanna Whittier."

"But I don't, Mrs. Tibbetts, on my honor, I don't," pleaded Jimmy; but, as the old lady could not hear him, his humility made no impression on her.

With unabated severity she continued, "If you ever make this child anything but happy, Mr. James

Pendleton, I hope she'll send for me. And I'll come, if you're at the earth's end, and murder you with my own hands."

"Thank you, Mrs. Tibbetts, I'll appreciate it if you'll do that very thing." Jimmy seized her hand, and shook it heartily, rather to her surprise. And the little episode relieved the tension and everybody laughed. Even the people in the next room, who did not have the least idea what it was all about, laughed as heartily as the others, swept along by the irresistible current of gay spirits.

Even the weather gave in at last. When Pollyanna went upstairs to change to her going-away dress, someone shouted a surprising discovery, "The moon's out."

And so it was. The sombre clouds had vanished, and a big, benignant moon extinguished all but the most daring stars. The wet leaves and dripping blades of grass reflected the silver rays, while every pool in the muddy roads seemed lined with mother-of-pearl. And the night air was fragrant with a million delicate scents, breathed out by refreshed flowers.

The guests crowded out on the broad piazza to watch the young people drive away in John Pendleton's limousine, and a good many pairs of eyes were blinking rapidly as they looked, and a number of people were thankful that the comparative darkness

made it possible for them to use their handkerchiefs unobserved. As the car started away, Nancy rushed forward, and threw after it an old shoe. It was one of Timothy's and Nancy had selected it on the principle that the larger the shoe, and the shabbier, the more certain it was to bring good luck. It fell with a splash into a puddle some little distance down the drive, and Nancy turned to her husband and wept against his broad shoulder.

"Yes, I know and I'm glad fer her. But jest the same, she'll never come back to Beldingsville to live, and the town ain't the same place without her, it ain't, it ain't."

But there were no tears in the interior of the limousine. Jimmy had drawn Pollyanna to him, almost before the door slammed shut. "My own girl," he said.

In the circle of his arm Pollyanna sat very still.

"It means more to me than it can to other fellows," Jimmy went on a little unsteadily. "For most of my life, you see, I've had to put up with makeshifts. No mother, an adopted father — though Uncle John is a prince, of course — and even a name that isn't really mine. But at last I've got something that's my very own."

Pollyanna nestled closer. "And so have I," she said softly.

"I should think so. It isn't that I belong to you, body and heart and soul, and might and mind and strength, and all the rest of it. But I'm yours because you made me, Pollyanna. You've given me everything. If it wasn't for you, I should probably be a second-rate farm-hand by now, if not a tramp."

Pollyanna sat up quickly. "I never heard anything so absurd," she declared with such emphasis, that, if her voice reached the chauffeur through the glass, as it probably did, he must have thought this young couple was getting an early start in family disagreement. "You were a boy who was bound to make his way. Anybody with a grain of sense could see that you were remarkable."

They discussed the matter vehemently all the way to the station, and Jimmy called Pollyanna a goose, and Pollyanna expressed the most unflattering opinion of Jimmy's intelligence. And then, as they waited for the train, which was half an hour late, as trains in Beldingsville were likely to be, Jimmy found a new reason for self-congratulation. Everyone said married people must quarrel sooner or later, and now their quarrel was behind them, so that they could look forward to undisturbed domestic felicity for the rest of their lives.

CHAPTER III

HONEYMOON SATELLITES

THE big seaside resort, where Jimmy and Pollyanna spent a memorable week, had been Pollyanna's own choice. Though she had lived abroad so many years, she had seen very little of her own country, and she had a childlike curiosity regarding those meccas of the summer pleasure-seekers whose names are household words.

Neither of the two young people was in a mood to be unduly critical, though Jimmy complained that, in making their selection, they had shown a lamentable lack of originality.

"They actually call that train we came down on the Honeymoon Special, and, if I should happen to put my arm around you on the board-walk, nobody would give us a second glance. It would just be taken for granted that brides and grooms are likely to behave that way."

As a matter of fact, all but the most ardent lovers of their kind would have found the crowds of people a drawback to complete enjoyment. Jimmy said

that the beaches at the bathing hour reminded him of sheets of sticky fly-paper in a country kitchen. But Pollyanna, who, as a little girl, "loved folks," had never outgrown that early enthusiasm. The crowds upon the sand, the shrieking lines of bathers, holding fast to the ropes, and the throngs that tramped the boardwalk until late into the night, all contributed to a peculiar feeling of exhilaration, that Jimmy did not altogether share.

But they were quite in sympathy in their love for the ocean, sometimes so deeply blue that even the blue sky paled beside it, sometimes a sombre greenish-grey. And there was one wonderful day of storm, when the breakers dashed over the piers, and the waves rolled in almost to the verandah of the hotel, and Pollyanna and Jimmy, clad in rain-coats, went for a long walk which was one continuous fight against a seventy mile gale. They came back glowing and laughing, and their fellow guests scrutinized them thoughtfully, as if wondering when they were going to be old enough to know better.

They both liked to rise early and go out upon the beach before the picnickers and bathers and people who must always be munching something, had strewn it with papers and fragments of sandwiches and broken candy boxes. It had all been washed clean during the night, and the receding waves had left

ripples in the sand. There was often a sprinkling of tiny shells, and sometimes they found a branch of sea-weed, or a stranded jelly-fish, the latter looking, as Jimmy pointed out, like a gelatine pudding that had not been altogether a success. Out of all the day, they loved these early hours best, before the racket of the boardwalk began, and the blaring of the bands drowned the sea-gulls' plaintive cries.

"Seems as if the world had been made on purpose for us," Pollyanna remarked on one such occasion and Jimmy said, "Well, it was, wasn't it?" in a very matter-of-fact way. Since Pollyanna had been made for him, and he for her — and there was no possible question about that — it did not seem to be asking too much of a beneficent Creator to throw in a world for good measure.

Of course they came into breakfast with prodigious appetites, and a glowing interest in everything, in striking contrast to the listless attitude of the people who had sat up late over bridge and came yawning down to breakfast just in time to get into the dining room before the doors were closed.

It was on their second morning that Pollyanna called Jimmy's attention to a little group at a near-by table.

"Jimmy, aren't those the darlingest children? The oldest one — the girl — is such a little mother

to the three boys. The real mother hasn't been down to breakfast either day."

"The hotel seems to have its full quota of children," Jimmy remarked. "I'm positive I've heard fifty-seven varieties of howls."

"I'm sure these children don't howl," protested Pollyanna. "They all seem so sweet and good-tempered."

It was unfortunate that she should have directed Jimmy's attention to the group at that particular moment, for, even as he looked, the girl, on whose motherliness Pollyanna had just commented, seized the boy sitting next her by the collar and shook him violently. The boy promptly retaliated by sticking out his tongue.

Jimmy chuckled teasingly. And then, as Pollyanna looked crestfallen, he attempted to restore her spirits by saying, "Never mind, dear, — I've no doubt it was deserved. Discipline must be maintained, as that fellow in Dickens was always remarking."

It happened that the flock of children rose from the table simultaneously with Jimmy and Pollyanna, and as they left the dining-room, Pollyanna found herself beside the oldest of the quartet. The girl glanced in her direction with the flicker of interest the most sophisticated are likely to show in one who

is unmistakably a bride, and, as the eyes of the two met, Pollyanna smiled.

There was something peculiarly inviting about Pollyanna's smile. It seemed distinctly an overture to friendliness. And, after a pause, apparently devoted to reflection, the girl smiled back.

Pollyanna was quick to take advantage of the opening, "I've been noticing you and your little brothers," she said, "And envying you a little, I'm afraid. I was an only child."

"I just wish I was," the girl replied.

"Oh!" Though the words had been spoken with great distinctness Pollyanna was convinced that she had not heard correctly. "I didn't quite understand you."

"I said," the girl repeated, raising her voice a little, "I wished *I* was an only child. If you never had brothers," she explained emphatically, "you've no idea how perfectly horrid boys can be."

The boy who had received the shaking at breakfast was on ahead, but not so far that his sister's uplifted voice failed to reach him. He turned and contorted his features in a frightful grimace, "There!" the girl exclaimed triumphantly. "You see!"

"He seems very full of life," Pollyanna suggested faintly.

"Oh, life!" The girl shrugged her shoulders. "I should call it the old Nick." She inspected Pollyanna carefully, and apparently with satisfactory results. "Are you going to stay long?"

"Only a week."

"I'm sorry, I like your looks. You see my mother is quite a social favorite," explained this astonishing child, "and most of the time, when she's around, she's sleepy and doesn't want to be disturbed. So I get lonesome for somebody to talk to. I don't mind telling you that girls of my own age bore me stiff."

Aware that Jimmy was waiting for her, Pollyanna acknowledged the confidence with a smile that was intended to terminate the interview, but, as she turned away, the girl caught her by the arm. "You can call me 'Gladys' if you like," she said, in the tone of one who confers a favor. "Generally I prefer to have strangers say 'Miss Moore,' but I kind of like your looks."

While her brief conversation with Miss Gladys Moore had not altogether confirmed Pollyanna's original favorable impression, she was nevertheless oddly drawn to the girl. She realized that she was saddled with responsibilities that were too much for her, and did not really belong to her, and so cheated out of the universal right to a care-free childhood. Moreover, under her air of sophistica-

tion and a somewhat patronizing manner, Pollyanna detected a real longing for congenial companionship.

She was hardly prepared, however, for the persistency with which Gladys manoeuvred to secure as much as possible of her society. When Pollyanna and Jimmy went to bathe, which was generally twice a day, for both enjoyed the water as heartily as if they had been a pair of porpoises, the four young Moores were soon capering on the beach, arrayed in bathing suits. When Pollyanna tired of swimming and stretched herself on the sand to acquire the sunburn which for some inexplicable reason is considered one of the pleasures of a stay at the seashore, Gladys took the same moment for her sun-bath. Whenever they went on the boardwalk, a procession of Moores, with Gladys leading, trotted at their heels. If, at a late hour, they sought the deserted fishing pier, anticipating a quiet interval with the moon and the water, the uplifted voice of Gladys was soon heard, warning Malcolm or Gregory against rashness, or reproving Norman, the youngest child, for failing to make proper use of his handkerchief.

"Look here," the patient Jimmy protested at last, "your little friend is getting on my nerves. She's like a piece of adhesive plaster."

"I'm sorry for her," Pollyanna sighed. "She's so lonely."

"Lonely! Well, she doesn't allow us to be lonely, that's sure. I never heard of a honeymoon with so many satellites."

"She likes to talk with someone older than the boys. They're not company for her. She's rather old for her age. And no wonder," Pollyanna cried, waxing indignant, "when she has to take her mother's place looking after those small boys. Oh, that woman! Honestly, Jimmy, I think lots of people who sound wicked, like embezzlers and murderers, you know, are really better than a mother who neglects her children!"

"Whew!" whistled Jimmy, honestly surprised. Pollyanna had, to a very large extent, retained her childish propensity for discovering the best in everybody, and so the severity of this verdict was the more unexpected. To Jimmy, Mrs. Moore seemed a vain and silly little woman, whose social interests absorbed an undue amount of her energies; but he would hardly have placed her in the criminal class. Mrs. Moore really looked young to be the mother of such a flock, and she made desperate efforts to look still younger, by a liberal use of cosmetics and by counterfeiting an air of girlish vivacity.

One of the pathetic things about Gladys, from

Pollyanna's viewpoint, was her pride in her mother's social successes. She never seemed to resent her shirking of her maternal duties, though she was sufficiently clear-sighted regarding the short-comings of her brothers.

"You feel so sorry about being an only child," she remarked to Pollyanna one forenoon, as the two lay dripping on the sand, under the friendly rays of the June sun, "well, all I can say is I wish you could try Malcolm or Gregory for a week, and then if you didn't thank your lucky stars ——"

"And I wish you could try a week of doing without them," Pollyanna interposed. "And then you'd be so lonely that you'd be more than glad to have them back."

"Not me!" Gladys burrowed down into the warm sand, as if it had been a blanket. "Malcolm's got an awful mean disposition, but he don't hold a candle to Gregory. Honest, if I knew I never would see that aggravating kid again, I'd be thankful."

Pollyanna was shocked, and spent considerable energy trying to make Gladys admit that she was only joking. "Joke nothing," declared the outspoken sister. "You see you don't know. You've never had any experience with brothers."

They were still arguing the question when Malcolm made his appearance, and in their absorption

they failed to notice that the little fellow was pale under his sunburn. Finding himself ignored, Malcolm roared his sister's name, and Gladys clapped her hand over her ears.

"For goodness' sake! Do you think I'm deaf? What is it?"

"Gregory's drowned."

Pollyanna started up with a cry. Gladys dropped her hands.

"What did you say?"

"Gregory's drowned."

"Don't you pay any attention to him," Gladys warned Pollyanna. "He's just trying to scare me."

"I ain't neither, I tell you he's drowned." Malcolm proved his sincerity by bursting into tears. Luckily, at that moment Jimmy came along the beach looking for his wife, and he took it upon himself to extract the whole story from the frightened boy.

Bit by bit, between his sobs, Malcolm told what he knew. He and Gregory had made up their minds to see how far out they could go, holding, of course, to the rope. But, after a little, Malcolm had looked back and seen a sand artist at work. Forgetting the competition he himself had suggested, he had splashed back to be rewarded by seeing a profile pic-

ture of Lincoln made in the sand. "An' then I looked 'round for Gregory — 'n' he was drowned," wailed Malcolm.

"Nonsense! He came in just as you did," Jimmy declared. "He couldn't have drowned without anybody's noticing him. We must find him, that's all."

But, though they hunted energetically among the bathers and sight-seers, who now covered the beach in such numbers that it was almost impossible to get about without stepping on some prostrate form, they found no trace of Gregory. And then Jimmy suggested that, as lunch time was approaching, they had better dress and go back to the hotel. "Mealtime is pretty sure to bring runaways home," declared Jimmy, who, in spite of his brave words, was beginning to look worried.

But the hour for luncheon came and passed and brought no Gregory. As Gladys was beside herself with nervousness and unwilling to let Pollyanna out of her sight, Jimmy superintended the midday meal of the other two boys, and, that duty dispatched he returned to the beach, and interviewed one of the life guards, a handsome young fellow who looked like a bronze statue come to life. After that brief talk, a pale, tight-lipped Jimmy called Pollyanna from Gladys' room to tell her that the thing was serious.

"Ask her where her mother is and find out her father's address. We can't shoulder the responsibility of this affair any longer."

Pollyanna's questions secured very little information. Gladys had no idea where her mother could be found. She had gone off in a private automobile with several people whose names Gladys did not know, and had said, as she left, that she might be late, and that Gladys was not to sit up for her. Gladys' father was in South America and apparently there was no near relative who might be summoned in such a crisis.

Though Pollyanna learned nothing of importance from her questions, Gladys did. She answered them one by one, and then sat staring at Pollyanna, with tragic, understanding eyes.

"Then it's true," she whispered. "Then he's drowned. I'm——" Her face was distorted by some torturing thought, "I'm going to get my wish," she panted. "I said — I never —— wanted — to see him — again."

"Oh, you poor child," cried Pollyanna, and took the unhappy little sister to her heart. "You said it, but you didn't mean it," she faltered, trying hard to think of something comforting. "And, Gladys dear, you can be glad that you didn't say it to him."

"But I did," Gladys moaned. "I've said it a

million times," and even Pollyanna could find no comfort for this.

The life guards and the police had all been notified of Gregory's disappearance, and they had shaken their heads when they learned he was in his bathing suit. Off the beaches a boy in a bathing suit would attract immediate attention. Jimmy found Gregory's clothing in a heap in the bath house he had occupied, and he carried the pathetic little pile back to the hotel, a big lump in his throat. Would that mother never come!

At six o'clock Jimmy ordered dinner for two to be sent to Gladys' room, and again acted as guardian of the two small boys who, though sobered and subdued, were still ravenously hungry. Jimmy himself found it impossible to make much of a meal, because every time he took a mouthful someone came over to ask him a question about the missing boy. Finally he abandoned the attempt, and was thankful when he could usher his charges out of the dining room, and leave them temporarily to their own devices.

Too nervous to remain quiet he paced back and forth in front of the hotel. The little he knew of Mrs. Moore had given him a contempt for her, yet he felt an obligation to prepare her for the crushing tidings she soon must hear. It was improbable that

the woman was altogether heartless and her grief would inevitably be augmented by remorse. Jimmy racked his brains for an opening that would prepare her for bad news, without telling her too much. But his desperate efforts only intensified his feeling of helplessness.

Suddenly his attention was attracted by a grotesque figure approaching the hotel from the direction of the town. His first impression was that it was one of those cripples who make capital out of their deformity by appealing to the sympathies of the charitable. Then, all at once, he uttered a shout suggestive of an Apache war-whoop, and pounced upon a small boy, wearing a man's coat which came to his heels. As Jimmy seized the diminutive figure and shook it, the ragged coat, smelling of the cheapest grade of tobacco, slipped off, revealing a wiry little body in a bathing suit.

"Stop that! You lemme go," whined Gregory, wriggling in Jimmy's grasp, "I haven't done nothing to you."

"Haven't you, though!" returned Jimmy grimly, recalling that one precious day, out of his all-too-brief week, had been given over to gloom, on account of this youthful delinquent. "Tell me quick where you've been, before I take you over my knee."

Gregory capitulated to the accent of authority,

and, aided by Jimmy's questions, told a straightforward story. He had followed Malcolm back to the beach after a breaker or two had gone over his head, and then, seeing Malcolm absorbed in watching the sand artist, Gregory had slipped away, intending to give his brother a chance to hunt for him. "An' 'most right away I thought I saw him comin'," quavered Gregory, growing nervous under Jimmy's stern attention. "An' there was a truck, with nobody in it, standin' on the road, an' it had a lot of empty baskets in it, big ones, the kind potatoes come in sometimes."

"Go on! What are you stopping for?"

"So I got in, just so's to hide from Malcolm, 'n' I pulled a basket over me upside down, just so he couldn't see me. An' all at once that truck started. Say, you'd better b'lieve I was scared!"

"Why didn't you yell and tell them to let you off?" demanded Jimmy, still resentful as he thought of his spoiled day.

"I was a-goin' to," replied Gregory, sniveling by now. "But when I peeked out, there was a big black man drivin' 'n' he looked like a pirate or somethin' an' I didn't dast let him know I was there."

Some time later, it appeared, when they had left the town quite a distance behind, Gregory had attempted to make his escape by dropping off the end

of the moving truck, and had been discovered. The driver had proved more humane than his piratical appearance indicated. He had explained to the stowaway that his wisest course was to accompany the truck and return when it did. As Gregory was now shivering, the negro had bestowed on him a disreputable old coat, and, arrayed in this, Gregory climbed to the high seat beside the driver and at noon shared the contents of his lunch pail. Now he was home, extremely dirty, extremely weary, and not a little frightened by Jimmy's menacing manner.

Of course it fell to Pollyanna to break the news to Gladys, and she did it characteristically. "Gladys, dear, I want you to think of the very gladdest thing that could possibly happen."

Gladys looked at her sharply and sat up. "You don't mean that that kid's showed up all right without being drowned or anything."

Pollyanna was aghast. "But, Gladys, remember how sorry you felt when you thought —— Oh, aren't you as glad as you can be to have another chance?"

Gladys drew a deep breath. "That means — he *isn't* drowned," she said. "Yes, I suppose I am glad, but I'm so awful mad that I can't think of much beside."

In spite of this not unnatural reaction from the

tension of the day, Pollyanna was of the opinion that during the remainder of their stay, she noticed a decided improvement in Gladys' attitude toward her brothers. She said as much to Jimmy, who listened sympathetically.

"Then I suppose we can consider our wedding trip a success," he said. "If it's enabled you to put the glad in Gladys."

Pollyanna did not notice. "I think we may see quite a little of them. In the winter they live rather near where we'll be." She turned inquiringly. "Did you speak, dear?"

"No," Jimmy said. "I was only groaning."

CHAPTER IV

ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN

"Be it ever so humbl-l-le,
There's no place like ho-o-o-me."

Jimmy sang the familiar lines in a shrill falsetto, with an artistic tremulo effect, and Pollyanna laughed till she dropped the tack-hammer and then — which was more serious — the box of tacks. She sat down on the brand-new rug to pick them up one by one, and threw a reproachful glance at Jimmy, who, picturesque in his shirt sleeves, had struck a dramatic pose on the top of the step-ladder.

"Jimmy, you must stop being so funny. If I spend all my time picking up tacks, and that sort of thing, we'll never be in order."

She spoke as if she were in a hurry to finish the task of getting settled, and Jimmy made a similar pretense, though secretly both of them realized that they had never had as much fun in all their lives before, and were not likely to have it again. It had begun when they returned from the seashore, and spent an exciting week buying their household fur-

niture. It had been a thrilling experience to get the better of the salesmen who were determined to sell them dining-room suites imposing enough for a palace, whose cost was equal to the entire sum they had set apart for their furnishings. And when they held their ground in this skirmish, they had it all to do over again in regard to purchasing a davenport large enough to occupy most of the space in their tiny living-room. Jimmy had remarked that, while they would save money by this purchase, since it would be unnecessary to buy any other living-room furniture, it would be inconvenient to be unable to enter the dining room except by jumping over the davenport. And Pollyanna, laughing as all good wives are bound to laugh at their husbands' witticisms, had laughed still harder at the expression of perplexity on the face of the salesman.

They had five rooms to furnish, or perhaps four and a quarter would be nearer the truth, for no one could regard the kitchen as really a room. Even the agent of the building had referred to it as a kitchenette, and that was clearly an exaggeration. Pollyanna said optimistically that it would save steps. Jimmy remarked that if the time ever came when he did not feel like drying the dinner dishes, he could always make the excuse that there was not room for him.

The furniture, all delightfully new and shining, was in place by now. Their wedding presents, sent down by express from Beldingsville, stood around in captivating disorder. Pollyanna and Jimmy were getting the full flavor of an entirely novel experience. While they pretended to be in a great hurry to finish, in reality they made every move as deliberate as they well could, for some instinct warned them that, whatever joys awaited them on ahead, the rapture of the first nest-making was one that could never be duplicated.

Jimmy moved the step ladder over to the window, to put up the fixtures for the white curtains, and peered out into the summer night. If Pollyanna had been noticing, she would have seen a shadow cross his face. Something in his voice made her look up quickly as he said, "How are you enjoying the view, Pollyanna?"

"The view? Why, of course I haven't had a great deal of time to look out of the window yet, but ——"

"When you *do* have time," Jimmy interrupted, "you'll enjoy the fire-escapes. Of course you've been accustomed to looking out on trees and grass and flowerbeds, and you may not be up to appreciating the esthetic possibilities of fire escapes. But you'll come to it, Pollyanna." The mockery of his

voice changed suddenly to seriousness. "I wonder if we made a mistake in not taking a front apartment, even if it did cost more."

It was not a new question by any means. They had discussed it earnestly before signing their lease. The big building was constructed around a central court, and, while the outer apartments gave on to the street, the inner faced the court. There was light and air in plenty, but, as the windows of their living room commanded a view of the rear of the opposite apartments, together with an impressive array of fire escapes, the outlook could hardly be regarded as inspiring. At times Jimmy experienced a harassing fear that he had sacrificed Pollyanna to his own pride. Perhaps he should have used his uncle's allowance to make his wife more comfortable, instead of turning it over in a lump to Aunt Polly.

Pollyanna read his doubt in his over-cast face, and scrambled up from the rug, where she had at last succeeded in corralling the last of the elusive tacks.

"Now listen, Jimmy," she exclaimed, "I'm gladder than ever that we didn't take a front apartment. Of course it means quite a saving in rent and beside that, it's more interesting."

"Oh, indeed!" Jimmy scoffed unbelievingly.

"It really is, Jimmy. When you look out from the front of those other apartments all you see is the

street. And what is there interesting about the street? But from here you can see all sorts of things, women washing dishes and making cake and pressing things with an electric iron. And yesterday such a pretty girl sat out on the fire-escape to dry her hair after she had washed it. She had such lovely black hair and, when it dried, it curled up all over her head."

Jimmy laughed, remembering Pollyanna's childish admiration for black curls. He finished his fixtures, then came over to her, put his arm about her and kissed her absent-mindedly, as if he were thinking of something entirely different. To carry out the pretense he said, "How about hanging some pictures?"

"Lovely!" agreed Pollyanna. "When the pictures are hung, it will really seem like getting settled, won't it, dear?"

Jimmy approached a row of pictures leaning against the wall and took up the largest. As he studied it, his expression changed noticeably. Out of the corner of his eye he looked at Pollyanna, whose manner had become defensive.

"Hm!" coughed Jimmy, his head on one side, as befits a connoisseur in art. "I'd really forgotten this. To whom do we owe this gem?"

"Now, Jimmy!"

"Why, there's no harm in asking who gave us a particular picture, is there?"

"No, of course, not, only — It was Mrs. Frost." Pollyanna tried to assume a sprightly air. "Where do you think we had better hang it?"

"If you ask me — in the darkest corner of the front hall, or else behind some door that always stands open."

"Now, Jimmy, please!"

"Of course you've had abundant opportunities for the study of art in foreign capitals, Mrs. Pendleton, and if you assure me this is deserving of my admiration, I'll take your word for it."

"It's my idea," said Pollyanna firmly, "that we should think more of people's good intentions than of — well ——"

"Meaning," translated Jimmy, "that you don't like it any better than I do."

"Oh, Jimmy, let's not talk about it. You see she wanted to give us pleasure."

"Then the surest way to gratify that amiable desire of hers is to hang it just as I suggested, where neither of us will see it, unless we go on purpose."

"Oh, please, Jimmy. If we bought something we didn't like, we could make fun of it as much as we pleased. But wedding presents are different. When you think of all the kindness and good will

they stand for, it makes them almost — almost sacred," said Pollyanna earnestly. "So please don't joke any more."

"All right, I won't. Say, how do you think that water-color of the Kelsey's would look over the table?"

Pollyanna approved the suggestion and then they had a wonderful time deciding whether the water-color was too high or too low, or exactly right. Jimmy, after hanging it, climbed down from the step-ladder to help Pollyanna decide, and in that absent-minded way of his, slipped his arm about her while they were making up their minds. Perhaps that was one reason why it took so long. Finally they came to the conclusion that the water color would appear to better advantage if hung two inches to the right, and one inch higher, and Jimmy made the necessary changes. Then they inspected it again, and pronounced it perfect. In this deliberate and agreeable fashion, they hung three pictures, and Jimmy announced that he was hungry; "ravenous," was his word.

"Why, Jimmy Pendleton," cried the delighted Pollyanna, "you said when we finished dinner that you'd eaten so much that you wouldn't want anything more for a week."

"It only shows how little we know of ourselves.

I'm as hungry as a bear just out of winter quarters. Any pie?"

"Jimmy, tonight we finished yesterday's pie, and you ate two pieces both nights, so of course there's not any more. I wonder what there is in the house!" Pollyanna gave herself up to housewifely musings which resulted in the inquiry, "Do you think you'd like a rarebit?"

Jimmy assured her with every appearance of sincerity that nothing he could think of would taste better than a rarebit. "I'll hang one or two pictures while you're making it," he said, "and then you can pass on them afterward."

Pollyanna hurried away to avert starvation from the head of the house, cheered in her task by Jimmy's tuneful whistling, and the creaking of the step-ladder as he moved it from place to place.

The delicious odor of melting cheese was diffusing itself agreeably about the tiny apartment, when in an instant Pollyanna's heart was turned to water by the sound of a terrific crash in the living room. She ran in, a fork in one hand, and a large spoon in the other, to find Jimmy standing in the middle of the room, gazing tragically on a pile of *debris* at his feet.

"Jimmy!" Pollyanna gasped, terrified by his expression. "What is it? Are you much hurt?"

Jimmy looked at her. "No," he said in a hollow voice, "I'm not hurt, but I deserve to be. I've ruined one of our wedding presents."

"Oh, is that all? Well, you know, dear, that accidents will happen in the best regulated families." With a relief that manifested itself in extreme lightheartedness, Pollyanna contemplated the wreckage strewn about the new rug. Jimmy had made a thorough job of it. Frame and glass and picture were all reduced to bits, and blended in an indistinguishable jumble.

"I can't give you any explanation or excuse," continued Jimmy, still in tones of tragic gloom. "I simply stood still right in the middle of the room and let it drop. Did you ever hear of such a preposterous performance? And it smashed against those andirons the Conways gave us — I moved them out from under the couch where you put them — and see what's left of it!"

Pollyanna stooped over the fragments. "Why," she exclaimed, and an attentive listener might have detected a suggestion of agreeable surprise in her tone, "it's Mrs. Frost's picture!"

"Yes," groaned Jimmy. "And, less than an hour ago, you were saying that it was sacred."

"I didn't mean that picture especially, Jimmy. I meant anything that people do for you because they

love you. Oh, my cheese!" Pollyanna flew back to the kitchen whither a subdued Jimmy presently followed her, to inquire dolefully for a dustpan and brush.

"You're going to sit right down with me and give your entire attention to this rarebit. I'll brush up that litter in the morning. I think the janitor will have more respect for me after tomorrow," said Pollyanna, as she poured a savory bubbling concoction over the slices of toast. "You see he sends up the dumb-waiter every morning for our trash. We don't have any garbage to speak of, because we eat everything up, except potato parings and egg shells, and everything is so clean and new that there's not any dust. It's a good thing to have some rubbish to send down before he gets to the point where he thinks it's not worth while to bother with us." And this cheerful view so relieved Jimmy's mind that he was able to do full justice to the rarebit, which by some miracle proved to be delicious, instead of tasting scorched, as it had every right to do.

But he was not to go to sleep without still further comfort, for, just as he was dropping off, Pollyanna's drowsy voice recalled him from the land of dreams. "Jimmy, if any of our wedding presents was fated to be broken, I'm glad it was that particular one."

Even in the darkness Jimmy did not trust himself to smile. "Yes, dear," he said in a tone nicely balanced between contrition and congratulation, "that's the way I feel about it."

CHAPTER V

TWO OF A KIND

POLLYANNA was homesick.

The attack had come on without warning. Jimmy had gone to his work early, as usual, and invariably, after Jimmy's departure, the little apartment seemed painfully empty and forsaken. But as long as Pollyanna had been confronted with the problem of crowding twice as much into the tiny closets as any closet could reasonably be expected to accommodate, and packing away in the trunks the articles that would not be needed for several months, instead of something that Jimmy was going to call for next week, she had got along very well. As she went from room to room getting things in shape, she was cheered by the thought that Jimmy was sure to notice any changes, and to exclaim, "Say, things have been moving today, haven't they?"

The real trouble was that now she did not have enough to do. Everything was in apple-pie order. She went about brushing speckless rugs, and dusting shining surfaces, and realized that there would be no

improvements for Jimmy to notice, when he came home, because there was nothing to improve.

This day was worse than usual on account of the left-overs. There were left-over mashed potaotes, to be made into potato croquettes; there were left-over peas that would hold the place of honor in a vegetable salad; there was left-over rice pudding that would certainly serve for a second meal, and possibly a third. However she might try to prolong the process of getting dinner, she could not possibly stretch it out to cover more than an hour. And Pollyanna had discovered that she was homesick at exactly twenty minutes past nine.

Of course, there were any number of pleasant things to do. She could go over to the Park and see the flowers, and, even though the gorgeous flower beds in geometrical designs could not fill the place of the dear wild flowers, back in her Vermont home, Pollyanna thoroughly enjoyed the Park. There were picture galleries within easy reach, and Pollyanna loved pictures. There were people everywhere, of all sorts and conditions, beggar and millionaire, young and old, commonplace, and with the picturesqueness that belongs to strange costumes and foreign faces, and Pollyanna loved her kind. But it is a peculiarity of homesickness to shrink from pleasure, just as a victim of a bad attack of indi-

gestion is repelled by the sight of food. Pollyanna cared for none of the things which ordinarily would have appealed to her.

She determined to use a little of her unwelcome leisure in writing a letter to Aunt Polly. But the very worst thing for an acute attack of homesickness is to write home. Pollyanna was in the midst of telling how perfect everything was, when she broke down and wept. And it is understating the case to say that she was appalled at such an unexpected exhibition of weakness.

"I believe you're steadily degenerating, Pollyanna Whittier Pendleton," she told herself sternly. "The older you grow, the less respect I have for you. When you were seven years old, you could be glad for a pair of crutches, though you were crazy for a doll. And now, when you have Jimmy, and a lovely little home, and everything that heart can wish, you sit here crying. I'm terribly disappointed in you."

After that rebuke there was nothing for the homesick Pollyanna to do but dry her eyes, but the letter to Aunt Polly was put away to be finished another time. Pollyanna jumped up and went to see if some of Jimmy's socks did not need darning, but Jimmy had invested in a large number of socks

at the time of his marriage and her inspection showed them disappointingly whole.

Pollyanna decided to clean the silver. It was new and shining, like everything else in the apartment; but instinctively she felt that to make something brighter, if it were nothing more than a pie-knife, would be an effective antidote to her present unreasonable mood. She went to work with tremendous energy, polishing everything, including the silver candlesticks, and the silver frame around Jimmy's picture. And when she caught the reflection of her own rather woe-begone face in the bowl of a soup spoon, Pollyanna laughed, and the laugh helped more than all her scolding.

It was approaching noon, and the last piece of silver had been polished within an inch of its life, when a startlingly unpleasant odor assailed Pollyanna's nostrils. She ran to the window of the kitchenette and looked out. From a window of an adjoining apartment protruded the head of a girl seemingly about her own age, and, if Pollyanna's face had been pensive that morning, at its worse it was almost jovial in comparison with the lugubrious countenance now confronting her from the near-by window.

It was not, however, her neighbor's cheerless visage that chiefly challenged Pollyanna's attention,

but the fact that over her head little wreaths of smoke were drifting out into the sunshine of the June world. "Is it a fire?" cried Pollyanna, waiving the formality of an introduction.

The other girl shook her head. "No, it's not a fire," she replied. "It's only my luncheon."

"Oh!" exclaimed Pollyanna sympathetically. "Scorched, didn't it?"

"It probably did," her neighbor replied. "But there's none of it left to show what happened to it. It was soup, and it has totally disappeared. There is a hole burned right through the bottom of my new aluminum saucepan, and down on the gas stove are little bright spots where the aluminum ran when it melted. How anyone can suppose it's nice to keep house ——"

She paused, her face working in a very significant manner. Pollyanna perceived that her neighbor was on the point of doing what she herself had done so recently.

"It's too bad your luncheon's spoiled," she interposed hastily. "But, in spite of such little accidents, I think it's lots of fun to keep house. Only these apartments are so small that one doesn't have enough to do."

"*I* have plenty to do," the other girl retorted resentfully. "I'm busy from morning till night, and

then nothing's ever right. And I'm getting sick of it."

She was too proud to use her handkerchief, and she sniffed violently instead. Fearing the worst, Pollyanna made haste to put a bright idea into words.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," she cried. "Your luncheon is spoiled, so I think it would be nice for you to come over and take luncheon with me."

The other girl stared. Apparently she was not accustomed to such hospitable offers from perfect strangers, for there was no suggestion of appreciation in her manner, only blank surprise.

"I suppose I ought to introduce myself first," apologized Pollyanna, realizing that her invitation had been somewhat unconventional. "I'm Mrs. James Pendleton. I haven't been married long, and we only went to house-keeping three weeks ago."

The blankness went out of her neighbor's stare. A ripple of laughter swept across her face, vastly improving its appearance.

"I'm Mrs. Russell Thayer," she reciprocated, "We've been married seven weeks, and been keeping house a month." She hesitated, and then inquired doubtfully, "Did you really mean it when you asked me to luncheon?"

"Of course. But you know it won't be a company luncheon. I hope you won't mind that."

"I don't care a bit what I have to eat," said Mrs. Russell Thayer very positively. "But this business of sitting down to luncheon all by myself is more like a nightmare than a meal. What time shall I come?"

"It's pretty near noon now. How would quarter of one suit you?"

"Oh, that will suit me perfectly. I'll see you later then." The face of young Mrs. Thayer was beaming as she withdrew it from view. And, if Pollyanna had taken a look at herself in one of the mirror-like spoons, she would have perceived that an expansive smile had banished every trace of her late pensiveness.

Pollyanna made the most of the time at her disposal and, if it was not a "company" luncheon, that was ready at quarter of one, it was a meal of which the most fastidious might have partaken with relish. Mrs. Russell Thayer ate hungrily, and asked question which made the practical Pollyanna open her eyes.

"I didn't know you could get muffins hot like this. What bakery do you like best?"

"I didn't go to the bakery for the muffins," said Pollyanna, "I made them."

"Made them! Not since you talked to me out of the window?"

"Why, of course. It doesn't take long to make muffins, you know."

"To make muffins like these," said young Mrs. Thayer, helping herself to another, "would take me more time than there is, I'm afraid. I get 'most everything at the delicatessen and the bakery. Russ frets sometimes. Says he gets tired of so much of the same thing. But men are always fussing about something, you know. They don't realize what an easy time they have."

Pollyanna was so astonished that she could not believe she had heard correctly. "An easy time?" she repeated incredulously. "Why, I don't know many housekeepers, unless they have large families, who work as many hours a day as my husband does."

"But men have so much variety," complained Mrs. Thayer. "Our lives are so monotonous."

"I think the men are the ones who suffer from monotony, lots of them, anyway. Take a bookkeeper's work, for instance. You and I, if we get tired of housework, can go out and do anything we like, go to the art gallery or the park, or ——"

Mrs. Thayer interrupted. "I suppose it depends on what you've been used to. Perhaps you came from a small town."

"Yes, I did. Beldingsville, Vermont. And it's

the prettiest little place," said Pollyanna with enthusiasm, "with the dearest people."

"Oh, yes, I dare say, but that explains why it is so easy for you to amuse yourself. Now, my home," said Pollyanna's visitor, with more than a touch of condescension in her manner, "was Porter, Ohio. And, while it hasn't such an enormous population — Oh, about forty thousand, I suppose — it's a real city. We have a nice opera house and a Carnegie library and — well, there's nothing here that's what you'd call a novelty to me."

They were ready for the dessert, and Pollyanna brought it on, little cakes with strawberry icing and lemonade. Immediately Mrs. Thayer's manner lost its suggestion of patronage. "You have to get those cakes at a confectioner's, don't you?" she asked. "You couldn't get such good ones at an ordinary bakery?"

"Oh, I made the cakes."

"You did! Since you asked me over?"

Pollyanna discreetly concealed her surprise at the question. "No, I made them yesterday."

"I'd love to be able to make little cakes like that," sighed the visitor. "I don't know how to do any cooking to speak of."

"I'll come over some day and make a batch for

you," Pollyanna promised. "Then you can see exactly how I do it."

It was after they had washed the luncheon dishes, and deserted the kitchenette in favor of the living room, that Mrs. Thayer noticed a framed photograph which Jimmy had hung so that it should have the advantage of the best light in the room. She scrutinized it carefully. "Isn't that some foreign city?" she inquired.

Again Pollyanna concealed surprise. "Its Rome. That's the Colosseum in the background, you see."

"But that girl looks like you."

"Yes. And that's my aunt at the right."

Mrs. Thayer turned sharply. "Then you've been abroad?"

"Yes, I lived abroad about six years with my aunt and uncle. He was a physician, and he went to Europe for study, you know."

"I see." For a moment the girl was silent, then with a half embarrassed laugh she demanded, "Why didn't you call me down when I was talking about Porter, Ohio?"

"Call you down? Why?"

"I was putting on airs, that's why. I thought you were a country girl, who could amuse herself by looking at the sky scrapers, or feeding the elephants at the zoo, while I was used to the excite-

ments of city life, don't you see? Didn't you feel like slapping me?"

"Why, you silly girl!" laughed Pollyanna. "Of course not."

"I should have, in your place," declared the visitor. "I should have dragged in Rome at the very next sentence." She studied Pollyanna reflectively. "What makes you so different from other people?"

"Different? How am I different?"

Pollyanna looked rather alarmed, and Mrs. Thayer hastened to reassure her.

"I didn't mean you were queer, you know. But it seems as if you got more fun out of things than most folks do."

"Oh, that! Yes, I suppose so. You see ——" Pollyanna checked herself abruptly. As a small girl she had taken everyone into her confidence regarding the glad game without a thought of the possibility of being misunderstood, but now the fear that she might be thought to be preaching rendered her rather uncommunicative as to the thing that had meant so much in her life. In answer to Mrs. Thayer's inquiring look she said hastily, "Oh, I've always tried to look on the bright side of everything. Some day I'll tell you more about it."

They spent a cosy afternoon getting acquainted. Pollyanna brought out her knitting and the two

young wives compared notes on a number of important matters, husbands, gas stoves, the price of butter, the peculiarities of janitors, and the shortcomings of city laundries. At five o'clock, with seeming reluctance, Pollyanna's visitor rose to take her leave.

"Mrs. Pendleton," she began a trifle formally, "I can't begin to tell you ——"

Pollyanna looked hastily to the right, glanced to the left, and then screwed her head around as if suspecting that someone had squeezed in between her chair and the wall, which would have been a tight squeeze for the most emaciated. Then she faced about, belated comprehension dispelling her air of perplexity. "Why — you mean me."

Young Mrs. Thayer seemed embarrassed. "Didn't I get the name right? I thought ——"

Pollyanna's shame-faced laughter cut her short. "Oh, yes, the name's right. It's only — I'm not quite used to it. In the stores they call me 'lady,' and the janitor says 'mum,' and I don't see much of anybody else except my husband, so I always think of myself as Pollyanna."

"Pollyanna! Is that your name?"

"Yes."

"What a dear little name! No, it's not little exactly, but it sounds like something to cuddle."

"I'd like to have you use it," smiled Pollyanna. "It sounds so much more homey than Mrs. Pendleton."

"I'd love to, and please call me Judith. Now I really must go or your husband's dinner will be late and he'll be cross."

She whisked out of the apartment and Pollyanna donned her bungalow apron and hurried to the kitchen, thinking how many interesting things she had to tell Jimmy. And she remembered, with the sense of unreality one feels in recalling last night's dream, that at twenty minutes past nine that morning she had been suffering the pangs of acute homesickness.

CHAPTER VI

COMPANY

THE day after Pollyanna's impromptu luncheon party, the morning mail brought important tidings. Indeed, the news was so exciting that Pollyanna felt it imperative to share it immediately with somebody. She stood for a moment, the letter in her hand, wondering if it would be possible to get Jimmy on the phone, and reluctantly decided against the idea. And then, as a bright thought struck her, she ran to the window, leaned far out and called, "Judith, Oh, Judith!"

A face appeared at the adjoining window more promptly than one would have believed possible, a face so radiant that Pollyanna actually forgot what she had meant to say. "Why," she exclaimed, "you look as if something wonderful had happened."

Judith burst into a laugh. "Do I? That must be because I was so glad to hear somebody calling my name. It seemed as if I were back home again."

"Oh!" Judith's remark had recalled to Polly-

anna's mind her thrilling bit of news. "What do you think! I'm going to have company."

"You are!" Judith's tone was rather non-committal, as if she were not quite sure whether the prospect of company were an occasion for congratulation or condolence. And then, realizing that Pollyanna's flutter had all the ear-marks of cheerful anticipation, she said pleasantly, "Some old friend, I suppose?"

Pollyanna's expression changed slightly. As a matter of fact Judith's very natural inquiry had suggested a phase of the subject which had not occurred to her earlier.

"I wouldn't call Mr. Fisher exactly a friend," she replied hesitatingly. "I never saw so very much of any of the family. But you see he comes from Beldingsville."

"Oh, yes. It's awfully nice to see somebody from home, isn't it?"

"Wonderful!" declared Pollyanna.

After waiting all day to tell Jimmy the great news, she found his way of taking it a little disappointing. Jimmy read the letter in which Mr. Fisher announced the date of his arrival, and looked at his wife out of the corner of his eye.

"I didn't suppose you knew the Fishers very well."

"Why — at home everybody knows everybody else."

"Yes, of course." Jimmy coughed. "You seem so overjoyed at the prospect of seeing him that I'm inclined to be jealous."

"Jealous! You absurd boy! As if there ever could have been anybody but you."

The subject was so fascinating that it was a rather long time before they got back to Mr. Fisher. And then Pollyanna remarked casually that the following day they would have dinner half an hour later than usual, since Mr. Fisher could not get out before seven o'clock. Jimmy's lips parted, as if he were on the point of making a remark, and then closed tightly, apparently to restrain, at all hazards, the speech that had almost been spoken.

"Just shows how homesick she's been, and never said a word to me, bless her game little heart. She's not glad to see old Fisher; she can't be. It's just the idea that he comes from home. Well, I won't spoil her fun by saying what I think about it."

Mr. Fisher did not present himself till nearly half past seven the following evening, and Pollyanna suffered the agonies familiar to most housekeepers wondering whether the chicken would be spoiled before the arrival of her guest. When at length he made his appearance, he offered no apologies. He

was a short, thick-set man, who breathed heavily, ate heartily, and had little to contribute to the joy of any social occasion. Casually, during the meal, he mentioned that his visit would last three days, and Jimmy looked obliquely at his wife, to see how she would take the news. But at once he perceived that Pollyanna's hospitality was equal to the strain.

"Three days. How nice, Mr. Fisher! Then you'll have time to tell us all the news from home."

"Hm! Yes! Yes, indeed," said Mr. Fisher, clearing his throat loudly. "I'll thank you for the gravy."

He did not tell them a great deal of news that evening, for, as soon as he had finished his dinner, he buried himself in his newspaper, and, by the time the dishes were out of the way, he announced himself ready for bed.

"Our guest is not exactly loquacious," Jimmy remarked drily, as the door of the little bedroom closed on the stout little man.

"I suppose he's tired. It's quite a journey from Beldingsville," Pollyanna reminded him.

Jimmy, who was about to say that Mr. Fisher could not retire too early to please him, thought better of it. "After all, he's our first visitor," he reflected, "and if Pollyanna gets any pleasure out of the situation I'm not going to spill the beans."

Mr. Fisher proved a rather inconvenient guest. After the first morning he wanted his breakfast half an hour earlier than the regular time, and he returned for dinner when he had finished his business, and not a minute before. He seemed to have little to say about Beldingsville, and considerable gratuitous advice to offer his hosts. He wondered greatly at their choice of a location. Why hadn't they picked out a place farther downtown?

"Why, you see," said Jimmy, speaking in a very level voice, and with his eyes on his plate, "we were thinking of our own convenience, not that of a chance visitor."

Pollyanna threw a disturbed glance in his direction and, though he was giving such fixed attention to his lamb chop, he felt the appeal of her troubled eyes. He closed his lips tightly, resolving that no matter how exasperating Mr. Fisher might become, he would not be betrayed into saying another word. And it was just as well he had made the resolution, for Mr. Fisher at once proceeded to express the most positive views on the inconvenience of apartments in general, and the special undesirability of this particular apartment where he was now being entertained.

"Just take that room where you've put me," said Mr. Fisher. "Why, it's ridiculous to call it a room. A closet, that's what it is. A good sized closet."

Jimmy took a rather hot piece of French fried potato and swallowed it whole.

"And your outlook here," continued Mr. Fisher, departing from his customary taciturnity, "why it's just a tangle of fire escapes. I don't understand why anybody should want an apartment where you can't see a blamed thing but fire-escapes."

"Oh, but you can," Pollyanna cried, throwing herself desperately into the breach, for she knew this was a sore point with Jimmy. "You can see so many interesting things, that I have to keep away from the windows till my work is done, for fear I'll waste too much time looking out. Jimmy, I think Mr. Fisher is ready for another chop."

"I'm afraid it's a little mite cold by now, ain't it?" inquired Mr. Fisher cautiously. "Lamb chops have to be sizzling hot to be good for much. Of course," he concluded kindly, while Jimmy ground his teeth in dumb wrath, "I understand you've got to make a lot of allowance for young housekeepers."

On the whole, when it came time to say good-bye to Mr. Fisher, Pollyanna bore up remarkably well. And the next communication from the Fisher family, which came about two weeks later, was not considered important enough to be repeated to Judith out of the kitchen window. Indeed, Pollyanna postponed announcing its news to Jimmy till after the

lights were out, and even then she had to make several starts before she could bring her courage to the sticking point.

"Jimmy, Matilda Fisher is coming Friday."

"Coming! Coming where?"

"Here, of course. To make us a little visit."

"Why on earth should Matilda Fisher want to visit us? She never came to your Aunt Polly's, did she?"

"We-ll no. But, of course, I knew her."

"Yes, I knew one-legged old Sam Stowe, flagman at the railroad crossing, but, if he wrote to say that he would spend next winter with us, I'd be a trifle surprised."

"It will be nice to have a real visitor," said Pollyanna with resolute cheerfulness. "Of course we didn't see a great deal of Mr. Fisher."

"Regularly at dinner time, which was a great comfort."

"Now, Jimmy!"

"Well, wasn't it a comfort? If you want me to call it an infernal nuisance, I'm willing, though I must say I'm disappointed in you."

"Jimmy, hush! I was only going to say that most of Mr. Fisher's time was taken up with business, while Matilda won't have anything to do but visit. And of course we can go around together and see

the sights," Pollyanna concluded in a very sprightly manner. "And that will be loads of fun."

Pollyanna's expectations were fully shared by Matilda. "I'm simply crazy to see everything," she told her hostess, as they rode up from the station in the elevated train. "Pa and Ma often say they wonder at my endurance. I love to keep on the go, and as long as there's anything to see, I'm never tired."

Pollyanna, who had assumed that this was a figurative expression of Matilda's buoyant interest in life, soon began to believe that it was a literal statement of fact.

"Well, what are we going to do this morning?" Matilda would invariably ask over the breakfast cereal. She occupied the luncheon hour with plans for the afternoon, while the evenings were given over to movies, moonlight excursions and similar diversions.

Long before the week was up Pollyanna was desperately weary. She had walked till she had blistered both her heels. She had gone sight-seeing under the August sun till she had acquired a nagging pain in her eyes, which made her wonder, ruefully, if it could be possible that she needed glasses. And more than once she had been obliged to fall back on the despised delicatessen, for Matilda kept her out so late that there was no time after her return to get a regu-

lar dinner. Several times, indeed, Jimmy was home before them, and Matilda greeted him on such occasions with the coquettish cry, "Oh, Mr. Pendleton, I suppose you think we're dreadful gadders, don't you? I do love to keep on the go."

But it was not only weariness that ailed Pollyanna. There was another explanation for her anxious face. As she and Jimmy had worked out their budget, the allowance for household expenses had seemed to her generous, and her personal pocket-money almost ridiculously ample. But in compliance with that most unreasonable of the conventions, which makes the host responsible for a guest's incidental expenses, Pollyanna had paid car-fare and bus-fare and steamer-fare and bought admission tickets to all sorts of entertainments, and settled for the luncheon, when, as frequently happened, the hour found them far afield. Before the week was up, she was obliged to appeal to Jimmy for financial assistance, and, though he gave her more than she asked for, and silenced her with a kiss, when she tried to say something about paying him back next month, she was very unhappy about it. She lay awake when she should have been sleeping, wondering where and how she could have economized and avoided the disagreeable sensation of being bankrupt.

Matilda was extremely sorry that she herself was

expecting a guest on the twenty-ninth, for otherwise she would have extended her visit. "There's really lots we haven't seen yet," she declared, "and I do so hate to leave anything unfinished. But I hardly see how we could have squeezed in another thing." And Pollyanna, smiling drearily, agreed that they could not accuse themselves of allowing even a fraction of time to go to waste.

Rigid economy ruled in the Pendleton apartment after Matilda's departure. Pollyanna did her best to make the cheap cuts of meat appetizing, and Jimmy ate what was set before him without seeming to realize the difference between Irish stew and chicken à la king. For entertainment they walked to the Park and sat on a bench in the moonlight, and said nice things to each other. But, after two weeks of uninterrupted cheer, Jimmy came in one evening to receive a rather timid kiss from a distinctly dejected wife.

"Hello! What's this?" demanded Jimmy, hanging up his hat. "When is the next Fisher to arrive?"

"Jimmy," cried Pollyanna, forgetting her gloom in admiration for his insight. "How wonderful you are! How in the world did you come to guess that?"

"What! You don't mean — Well, by jove, if this isn't the limit."

"Mr. Fisher is coming down on business again," explained Pollyanna faintly. "And he thought that this time he'd bring Mrs. Fisher with him."

Jimmy stood silent for a moment. He realized with indignation that, as the Fishers were saving hotel bills, and the cost of pleasure trips, they had reached the thrifty determination to see as much as possible of the metropolis under these economical conditions. But, as Pollyanna was so sensitive on the subject of her hospitality, he resolved to be cautious in expressing his opinion.

"This will make the whole — er — well, let's call it the whole Fisher family, won't it?"

Pollyanna ignored this. "Jimmy, I've been thinking it over, and I feel that I'll have to make a change about company. I'm afraid I haven't been quite — honest."

Jimmy seemed on the point of interrupting her, and then changed his mind.

"Of course," continued Pollyanna earnestly, "one of the lovely things about a home of your own is having your friends visit you, and, even if you're poor, you can share with them what you have. But I've been trying to share *more* than we have. Would you mind coming out in the kitchen, Jimmy, so I can keep an eye on my dinner while I talk."

Jimmy followed at her heels, his face expressing a flattering interest in what she was saying.

"Of course in Beldingsville," Pollyanna went on, "we always had chicken when we had company for dinner. But chicken in Beldingsville, when you can go out to Mrs. Doley's and buy them for twenty cents a pound, isn't the same thing as chicken here."

"Hardly," assented Jimmy.

"When Mr. Fisher was here before, and when Matilda came, I acted as if we had a great deal more money than we really have. And, ever since, we have been scrimping and economizing and trying to catch up, and it's not right. Now I've made up my mind that we're going to live on so much a week, company or no company. And of course," Pollyanna ended simply, "the people who are fond of us will want it that way."

Jimmy ate his dinner with marked relish, though even Pollyanna's dumplings could not make boiled mutton anything but boiled mutton. And, from casual remarks he let drop, Pollyanna gathered that he was rather anticipating the arrival of the latest contingent of the Fisher family. This was a relief, for she had gathered the impression, when first she broke the news, that he was anything but pleased.

The Fishers came in due time. Pollyanna met Mrs. Fisher at the station and conducted her home,

as Mr. Fisher had important business to attend to. Mrs. Fisher was interested in everything, and mildly amused at the proportions of Pollyanna's tiny guest-room.

"Pa told me that t'want much bigger than a good-sized dry-goods box," Mrs. Fisher said affably. "But don't you worry a mite. We can put up with most anything for a few days."

This assurance should have given Pollyanna fresh courage for the course to which she had pledged herself, but, as a matter of fact, it failed of the desired effect. Mr. Fisher was late to dinner as usual, but for once Pollyanna did not mind. The meal was one that would not be injured by delay and Pollyanna, moreover, like the majority of people, was glad to postpone anything disagreeable, even though she knew she must meet it in the end.

Jimmy had much ado to preserve a proper gravity when at length he faced his wife across the round dining-table. Pollyanna's cheeks were scarlet, and her guilty air suggested a child caught in some misdemeanor. The traditions of Beldingsville were uppermost in her mind for the moment. She was almost ready to wish she had condemned Jimmy and herself to bread and cheese for some weeks on ahead, that she might set roast chicken before this stout,

middle-aged couple, who, uninvited, had claimed her hospitality.

Cordially Jimmy addressed the lady on his right, "May I give you some chipped beef, Mrs. Fisher?"

Mrs. Fisher eyed Jimmy as if she suspected him of a practical poke, then gave her attention to the platter. The matter did not admit of doubt. The platter contained chipped beef with a milk gravy. And now Pollyanna's blush extended to her ears. It was a conflagration.

"Thank you," Mrs. Fisher said coldly, replying to Jimmy. "I don't care for any."

"You believe in a vegetarian diet, perhaps," said Jimmy cheerfully, as he helped her to potato croquettes and string beans. "Many authorities think it more healthful." He turned to the gentleman on his left. "How do you feel about it, Mr. Fisher?"

Mr. Fisher said he would take some of the chipped beef, but he said it grudgingly, and in evident disappointment. And the disapproval continued even when he allowed Jimmy to give him a second helping. "Not what you'd call filling," he explained.

"Enough of it ought to be," suggested Jimmy pleasantly. "More beans? And you'll have another croquette, I'm sure. I'm very proud of my wife's croquettes."

There was more for Mr. Fisher and Jimmy, as

Pollyanna, who generally did ample justice to her own cooking, was unable to eat more than a few mouthfuls. Jimmy, clearing his plate with his customary relish, praised everything extravagantly, while Pollyanna blushed and tried to stop him and Mrs. Fisher listened superciliously.

The Fishers cut their visit short, for, when the next morning Mrs. Fisher expressed the intention to visit West Point, Pollyanna offered to take her to the boat, but explained resolutely, though with a tremor in her voice, that she herself would not be able to go. And at once Mrs. Fisher assumed an aggrieved air, which was still in evidence when she bade her hostess good-bye, immediately after breakfast next day.

Jimmy laughed after the Fishers were gone that he might comfort Pollyanna, whom he suspected of wanting to cry. And, in order not to disappoint him, she did shed a few tears against his broad shoulder, though her predominant emotion was one of enormous relief.

"You did exactly right, honey," Jimmy encouraged her. "We're glad to to see our friends any time, but that's a different thing from running a free hotel for everybody who wants to invite himself to visit us. Talk about the crimes committed in the name of liberty! There are as many committed in the name of hospitality, believe *me*."

And Pollyanna, still moist-eyed, for the Fishers had been her first real real company, and it seemed rather dreadful that it should have turned out this way, agreed with him to this extent. "The people who have a right to our hospitality wouldn't even want us to make company of them."

CHAPTER VII

POLLYANNA AND THE LAW

In the intervals between the visits of the Fisher family, Pollyanna's friendship with Judith had been steadily progressing. The two young wives, transplanted, from homes where they had a wide acquaintance, to the desperate loneliness of a great city, found in each other's companionship a sort of life preserver, buoying them up when the waves of homesickness threatened to submerge them.

The similarity in their circumstances, which would have impressed a casual observer, was after all only a superficial resemblance. Pollyanna was thoroughly competent. The training she had received from Nancy in Aunt Polly's kitchen stood her in good stand, now that she was in a home of her own, and the work of the little apartment, instead of being burdensome, was one of her chief pleasures. Judith, on the other hand, detested everything connected with housework, as is likely to be the case with those who undertake any work of which they are ignorant. Though she was continually hurry-

ing, she was always behindhand. Often she complained of weariness, when Pollyanna failed to discover evidences that she had done anything worth mentioning.

But the difference between the two went deeper than this. Pollyanna, who had so early begun to play the glad game, instinctively looked for the bright side, and seldom failed to find it, while Judith indulged herself in periodic attacks of discontent, during which the most trivial matters took on the aspect of calamities. Although not exactly unamiable, she had a quick temper, and Pollyanna had reason to fear that frequent quarrels marred the peace of the little household in which she was becoming so much interested.

Pollyanna had not invited the Thayers to dinner, as she had longed wished to do, for the reason that the Fishers had temporarily exhausted such of her resources as were available for hospitality. But she had improved every opportunity to be neighborly that did not cost money. Several times she had gone to Judith's apartment and given her a cooking lesson, which after-results had proved less valuable than she had hoped. It is difficult to master any subject in which one is altogether uninterested, and Judith's firm conviction that cooking was mere drudgery rendered her a slow pupil.

Pollyanna was delighted when one day, shortly after the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, Judith came over to ask her assistance. Her appeal seemed to prove that their acquaintance had advanced to the point of real friendliness.

"Oh, Pollyanna, I'm in a dreadful hole. Won't you help me out? What do you suppose Russell has done now?"

"I'm sure I don't know," Pollyanna replied cautiously.

"Well, he met an old friend on the street the other day, and invited him out to dinner. Not to a restaurant, you understand. To a home dinner!"

Pollyanna smiled at Judith's injured tone. "You can't blame him for wanting to show off his wife."

"If I were to be exhibited simply as a wife, I might make a fairly good impression, but as long as I'm the cook, too, I suppose Mr. Dunning will go away pitying Russell, and thanking his lucky stars he is a bachelor. Men are such pigs!" Judith ended witheringly.

Pollyanna had debated similar questions with her on a number of occasions, but she decided not to accept this challenge. Instead she began to make inquiries as to Judith's plans for the meal, and, finding Judith's mind apparently blank, she proceeded to make suggestions. And when they reached the

important item of dessert, she had more than a suggestion to offer.

"Judith, I know a wonderful pudding that's not very expensive, and I'll come over and make it for you, if you like."

"If I like! Oh, Pollyanna, you've saved my life. You're an angel."

"The idea! I love cooking, you know. I'm just treating myself to a lot of fun at your expense. Here's a pencil and paper. I'll tell you exactly what to get."

The two had several conferences before the day was over, and during the third and last it was arranged that the next morning Pollyanna was to hurry through her own work, and be at Judith's apartment by ten o'clock. "You see this dessert needs to have plenty of time to cool," she explained. "And, when I finish that, I'll lend a hand wherever you need me."

Judith's gratitude was unmistakable. "Pollyanna, you're a perfect dear. If I get through this awful ordeal without disgracing myself and making Russell furious, it'll be all your doing."

"I tell you I like it. I'll be around on the stroke of ten."

"I'll be looking for you." Judith threw her arms about her neighbor and gave her an impulsive kiss,

which Pollyanna promptly returned, though she was almost embarrassed by Judith's ardor.

"Anyone would suppose I was doing her a great favor," she reflected, "when, of course, it's just a pleasant way of passing the time. It's lovely to have people so appreciative, only you feel as if you were getting something under false pretenses."

After making all her arrangements so carefully, Pollyanna was a trifle annoyed at not being able to gain entrance to Judith's apartment at the hour agreed upon. She had rushed through her work as she had promised, and at ten o'clock precisely had her finger on the button of Judith's electric bell. When no Judith appeared, she rapped loudly, though it was quite evident that anyone in the little apartment could not be oblivious to the buzzing of the bell. After rapping, Pollyanna rang again, and then reluctantly returned to her own quarters.

"I suppose she's out finishing her marketing," Pollyanna reflected. "She'll be back right away, of course."

At half past ten she made another visit to Judith's apartment. And at eleven she rang the bell for the third time, with no better results than on the previous occasions. And by now she was getting really anxious. In addition to the pudding, she had promised to make some of the little frosted cakes, for

which Judith professed an extravagant fondness. The pudding needed time to cool, and the icing of the cakes would be sticky unless it had time to harden.

"If I only had the materials, I'd start in on the cakes in my own kitchen," Pollyanna thought, "and Judith could pay me back afterwards."

But unluckily she had only enough sugar for the oatmeal next morning, and, as it was the day before her allowance was due, her pocket-book contained little beside her latch-key. It was necessary to get into Judith's apartment immediately. Although she had rung the bell not five minutes before, she rushed into the hall, and rang it again, with the same unsatisfactory result.

Pollyanna rather prided herself on the fact that an emergency sharpened her wits, and, as she disconsolately turned away from the unresponsive door, a sudden inspiration made her wonder why the way out of her difficulty had not occurred to her earlier. The fire-escapes had been the fly in their matrimonial ointment, Jimmy was always grumbling about them, the Fishers had criticized them, and now it would be turning the tables on fate if they could be made to serve her turn.

"If only Judith has left the window unlocked!" thought Pollyanna, as she climbed cautiously out

of her own window. "She's such a careless creature, that the chances are good."

As a matter of fact, Judith's window was not only unlocked but wide open, and Pollyanna pulled herself up to the sill, reflecting that it was as well for one to have a little practice in the use of fire escapes, so as not to feel so queer and light-headed when one looked down at the court below. But she forgot everything else when she found herself in Judith's kitchen, with all the sugar she needed. She lighted the oven immediately, and fell to work upon the little cakes. By the time the oven was ready for them, they were ready for the oven.

Pollyanna was just washing her hands, preparatory to beginning on the pudding, when the door bell rang. She glanced at the clock, shook her head smilingly, and started to answer the summons. And, though the bell again rang furiously, before she could reach the door, it did not occur to her to wonder how Judith was aware that the apartment was not empty. With her hand upon the knob of the door, she called playfully, "I've a great mind not to let you in."

The answer came back in a deep, masculine voice, with more than a touch of Irish brogue, "Opin, in the name av the law."

Pollyanna flung the door wide. A policeman

stood in the hall, an astonishingly businesslike policeman, with an official frown between his brows, and in his hand a revolver, which also looked official. Such an apparition was calculated to upset the stoutest nerves, but Pollyanna's life-long habit of expecting only friendliness stood her in good stead. She only stared at him and exclaimed, "Is anything the matter?"

The policeman himself did not seem quite sure. "Are ye the loidy av the house?"

"No, I'm not. She's out just now. Is it anything I could attend to?"

"How came ye here?"

Pollyanna hesitated, then laughed at her own unreasonable uneasiness. "Why — why there were some things I wanted to help her about, so I got in through the window — from the fire escape, you know."

"Oh!" Up to that moment the policeman had seemed in doubt. Now he had the air of a man who knows his duty, and intends to do it. He stepped into the apartment, and gave Pollyanna the full benefit of his official frown. "Ye'll have to be goin' along wid me," he said. "If ye are sinsible, ye'll make no fuss."

"Going — where! I don't understand you."

The policeman showed signs of losing his temper.

"Aw, come off! Whativer ye are, ye are no fool. That's plain to tell from the looks of yez. Folks don't climb into ither folks apartmints from the fire escape for anny good."

Pollyanna interrupted him with a little cry. "Oh, my cakes!" She sprang past him, and the policeman shouted a warning.

"None av your thricks! There's an officer waitin' fer ye below and ye haven't a chanct."

Pollyanna ignored him. She threw open the oven door, and drew out the muffin tins, filled with little cakes, now delicately browned, and emitting a most appetizing odor. She slipped one out of its ring, and satisfied herself that the bottom was not scorched, a matter regarding which she had felt a momentary painful doubt.

The officer pushed back his helmet and scratched his head. While his intelligence was apparently embryonic, there was something about the little cakes that tended to disarm the suspicion of the most stupidly suspicious. Even the policeman, used to the innumerable tricks and devices of the criminal class, could not quite reconcile the phenomenon of the cakes with designs upon the family silver.

As he pondered, Pollyanna was apparently giving her entire attention to transferring the cakes from the tins to the waiting platter. But her air of

absorption was misleading. If it had occurred to the policeman to take her pulse, he would have found that her heart was thumping, which to his mind, in all probability, would have given conclusive evidence of guilt. Pollyanna was beginning to realize that gaining access to neighbors' homes by the window might be one thing in Beldingsville, Vermont, and quite another in New York City. Probably some apartment dweller had seen her unconventional entry, and summoned the police. Pollyanna had no doubt, of course, that she would ultimately prove her innocence, but the prospect of going to the police station, escorted by this man in uniform, seemed an intolerable disgrace. What would Jimmy say when he learned that his wife had been arrested for housebreaking!

The bell rang again, and by this time Pollyanna had come to the realization that Judith could enter with a latch key, and the ring suggested another policeman, perhaps several of them. Her hand shook till the knife she was using beat a tattoo on the table. The policeman eyed her, saw that she was frightened, and drew his own conclusions.

"Who wud that be, now?"

"I don't know," said Pollyanna faintly. She did not think it necessary to express her apprehension that the authorities had called out the reserves

to guard a dangerous prisoner. Nor did it occur to her that the officer might suspect the arrival of an accomplice.

"Open the door," he ordered, as the bell rang again, "an' whoiver's there, let him in. Don't thry givin' him a tip. Understhand?"

Pollyanna went to the door, the policeman keeping well in the background, and yet near enough to do anything that might be necessary. It was a day of surprises, and what happened next was not the least in the number. For the door opening revealed Judith with a market basket on her arm, a hot, and seemingly almost hysterical Judith. Without a word of explanation, she pushed into the hall, dropped upon the waiting bench, and broke into convulsive laughter, that seemed momentarily on the point of turning into stormy weeping.

"Judith!" implored Pollyanna. "What is the matter? What has happened?" Her blood chilled as she realized the probable effect on Judith, especially in her mood of unnatural excitement, of discovering a policeman in her apartment.

"Pollyanna," Judith gasped, "ask me what hasn't happened. Such a morning!"

"But why did you ring? How did you know I was here?"

"I knew you'd have to get in somehow," Judith

explained, "to start the cakes, you know. Why, it's almost noon. I felt pretty sure you'd think of the fire escape."

"I did." Pollyanna spoke rather grimly. "But where have you been?"

"I've been walking miles and miles and miles, Pollyanna. Do you remember telling me about that market, where you could get nice chickens so much cheaper than you can around here? Well, I went there this morning, and my pocketbook was stolen."

Pollyanna's exclamation of shocked sympathy showed that for the moment she had forgotten the policeman.

"Oh, it wasn't very serious. It's an old pocketbook, and I'd bought everything I needed. There was only about a dollar in change, and my latch key. But I had to walk home! Think of it, Pollyanna, with everything there is to do today."

The policeman coughed, and Judith sat up with a jerk. "Who's that?"

"Why, you see, a policeman called ——"

"A policeman! Why, what in heaven's name is a policeman doing in my apartment?"

The officer appeared. "Are ye the loidy av the house?" he asked as he had asked Pollyanna.

"Yes. What is it? Has anything happened to my husband?"

"Aisy, aisy now," counseled the policeman soothingly, for Judith's nerves had been under a strain that morning, and the closing question was fairly screamed at him. "Sure there's nuwthin' wrong wid anny av yer folks. And is this young loidy a friend av yours?"

Judith looked wildly at Pollyanna. "Why, of course."

"And it's all right her bein' here when ye're out?"

"Why, she had to be here. She had to help me get ready for company." Judith suddenly burst into tears. "I think this is the most dreadful place I ever lived in," she sobbed. "Where you have to explain everything you do to an officer."

The policeman shuffled his feet and grinned. "Sure," he said coaxingly, "another day ye may be glad to have us boys, Johnnies on the sphot." He turned to Pollyanna with his most ingratiating air. "Thim little cakes now, I'm not saying they're the kind my mither used to make but, belave me, the auld loidy would have made that very sort, had she known how."

Pollyanna gave him two, and said that she was only sorry that they were not frosted. The police-

man's expansive smile, as he departed, indicated that he was in the best of spirits.

The afternoon was hectic. Judith's harrowing experience had apparently made it impossible for her to settle down to work, and Pollyanna, after finishing the pudding and icing the cakes, gave her attention to stuffing the chicken. When that was in the oven, she prepared the creamed potatoes, and mixed the salad. Spurred on by her example, Judith finally succeeded in pulling herself together sufficiently to set the table. She gave a great deal of attention to the candlesticks, with candles and shades to harmonize with the flowers in the centre. The table looked very pretty; but Pollyanna's native modesty was not proof against the conviction that, without her assistance, the dinner could hardly have been successful.

Pollyanna's own dinner was late, but Jimmy did not mind, he was so interested in hearing his wife's recital of the day's experiences. "If you have been arrested," he teased her, "I suppose you would have been glad that it was only for attempted burglary, and not for manslaughter or something like that."

"Jimmy," said Pollyanna plaintively, "the only thing I can see in this day to be glad about is that it is almost over."

CHAPTER VIII

JIMMY FORGETS SOMETHING

No one has ever satisfactorily explained the disconcerting tendency to oversleep the mornings when it is most necessary to wake on time. Pollyanna generally slept with the soundness popularly, if erroneously, supposed to indicate an untroubled conscience, and accordingly, as a rule, about six o'clock she wakened, thoroughly refreshed, and feeling ready for the day. But on the particular morning which Jimmy had selected as the occasion for an early start, Pollyanna was awakened by an emphatic ejaculation, "Je-ru-sa-lem!"

Pollyanna sat up blinking. "What is it, Jimmy?"

"It's quarter of eight, that's what it is." Jimmy leaped out of bed. "If this isn't the most confounded luck," he scolded. "I should have left the house half an hour ago."

There was no further attempt at conversation. Pollyanna dressed in frantic haste, and, for once in her life, made a boudoir cap a substitute for

combing her hair. Jimmy omitted shaving, and appeared at the breakfast table before anything was ready. Pollyanna, thanking her stars for ready-to-serve breakfast food, fried the bacon with an anxious eye on the coffee pot, which had an air of intimating that under no circumstances would it hurry itself. Of course the toast, entering into the general perversity of the morning, improved the opportunity to scorch. There was no time to make more, and Pollyanna scraped the slices, hoping that Jimmy would not notice.

When Jimmy had everything he wanted, she slipped back into the bedroom to make herself presentable before eating her own breakfast. She had combed her hair, and was beginning to look her usual trim self, when it occurred to her to wonder why it was taking Jimmy so long to finish. She hurried into the dining room to find it empty as far as human occupancy was concerned, the table presenting that peculiarly uninviting appearance which is the inevitable sequel to a finished meal, whether the meal is a banquet or a hasty breakfast of bacon and eggs.

Pollyanna should have realized at once what had happened. But it was not till she had satisfied herself that Jimmy's hat had disappeared from the

hall, that she grasped the situation. Jimmy had left the house without kissing her good-bye!

Pollyanna was conscious of a creeping chill, even in the warm, pleasant little room. What did it mean? Had he forgotten to say good-bye, or had he chosen this way of expressing his displeasure? If the latter explanation seemed very unlike Jimmy, the former impressed her as impossible.

Pollyanna was as sensible as any wife of three months' experience is likely to be. She gave herself a little shake. She was not going to make a mountain out of a mole hill. Even if Jimmy had gone away in a bad temper, the ruffling of his usual amiability was not worth a second thought, Pollyanna decided. "I should have set the alarm clock, of course; but I always wake so early that I never dreamed I'd need it."

She set about her morning's work with less than her usual briskness, and was so absorbed in her uneasy misgivings as to forget that she had not breakfasted. She decided that she would give Jimmy the things he liked best for dinner. Fortunately Jimmy's preferences did not run in the direction of artichokes and strawberries out of season. His favorite dish was fried onions, and fried onions, in an apartment little larger than a bird

cage, are a blessing there is no possibility of disguising. Pollyanna was sure she could detect their odor in her clean underwear for a day or two after they had graced her table, and she feared that those of her neighbors who did not appreciate these delicacies might be obliged to share their fragrance if not their flavor. Yet, undeterred by any of these objections, Pollyanna decided on fried onions as the *chef d'œuvre* of her dinner and then went on selecting her menu without the slightest interest in making it a well-balanced meal. All she cared about was to present an assortment of favorite dishes that would inevitably restore Jimmy's balance.

Pollyanna's native cheerfulness was so far restored by this practical solution of her difficulty that the day would probably have been unmarred by any further forebodings, had she not decided to divert her thoughts by reading. Pollyanna had always been under the impression that to sit down to read for entertainment before mid-afternoon was a piece of self-indulgence permissible only in case one was not feeling well. But this particular morning she was conscious of a disagreeable, droopy sensation, as different as possible from her customary buoyancy. Probably the fact that she had eaten no breakfast had something to do with it, though Pollyanna attributed it to an entirely different cause. A day that started

off without Jimmy's good-bye kiss was like a day when the sunrise had been omitted.

Unluckily for Pollyanna's peace of mind, she had at hand a book she had drawn the previous day from a circulating library on the strong recommendation of the librarian, and at eleven o'clock she stretched herself on the couch in the living room, prepared to forget the worries of actual life in an excursion into the realms of fancy.

Pollyanna had been well-grounded in the English classics, but she was somewhat unsophisticated as regards the modern movement. She still innocently supposed that works of fiction were written to give pleasure. The first chapter interested her immensely, because in it she made the acquaintance of two young married people, like Jimmy and herself, desperately in love, and deliriously happy. And she had reached the third chapter before her interest became tinged with apprehension. The author seemed to take it for granted that falling in love was Nature's practical joke upon the human race, and that the first joy of married life must soon be replaced by disillusionment, if not despair. The change in the hero's feelings toward the heroine was described with a detail which might have seemed wearisome had Pollyanna not had her own reasons for being interested in the subject.

She read on and on, with a growing sense of the hollowness of the world, an impression undoubtedly aided by her own feeling of hollowness. A satisfying meal is an admirable ally of common sense. Pollyanna had not eaten since six o'clock the previous evening, and her common-sense was temporarily incapacitated for action. Breathlessly she read how, at last, the hero looked across the dinner table at the heroine and realized that he was chained to her for life, and a cold chill ran down her spine. Her faith in the efficacy of fried onions began to wane.

It was two o'clock before she laid down her book, impelled by a growing faintness, and went to make herself a cup of tea and a slice of toast. It took an effort to swallow even these. Could it be that the author's assumption of omniscience was justified? Was it possible that life was like this? Was she a heedless child, playing on the slopes of a volcano which would inevitably bury, under a rain of ashes, all the heart's dearest hopes and joys? If only Jimmy had not gone away that morning without kissing her good-bye!

She had not risen from the table when the bell rang, and she went to answer it, so absorbed in her own dismal reflections that she did not even wonder who had come to see her. But she woke from her trance as a sleep-walker might under like conditions,

when someone seized her, hugged her, and shrieked ecstatically, "It's me! It's me! You didn't expect me to find you so quick, did you?"

"Oh, Gladys, dear. I'm so glad to see you!"

There would be no doubt as to the cordiality of Pollyanna's welcome. Almost from the beginning she had felt a tempered affection for this precocious and unprepossessing child, and by now her own thoughts had grown to be such bad company that she would have welcomed any distraction.

Gladys took it for granted that she must immediately make a tour of inspection of the apartment, but her attitude was not critical like that of the Fishers. Indeed she admired everything.

"Say, ain't it nice and quiet?" she sighed. "You're lucky not to have a crowd of boys stamping around. The other tenants are always sending the janitor up to tell us to be quiet. Much good it does!"

Pollyanna tried to imagine the effervescent Malcomb and Gregory bottled up in a city apartment and her sympathy was not altogether for the neighboring tenants.

"Of course they're both in school now," Gladys continued; "but lots of days I can't make 'em go. Gregory, he'll say he's got a sore throat, and then Malcolm will say he's got a pain in his stomach and

by quarter past nine, they'll be turning the bath hose on each other, and making such a racket that it wakes Mother. And, when Mother doesn't get to bed till two or three o'clock, she needs to sleep till pretty near noon. If she don't, she'll get wrinkles."

Pollyanna's liking for Gladys was not sufficient to lead her to counterfeit interest in the tragedy impending if Mrs. Moore should be awakened too early. Without comment she brought out her knitting, and the two oddly contrasted friends settled down to a long talk. But, in spite of a lack of encouragement which Pollyanna almost feared might seem discourteous, Gladys insisted on talking about her mother.

"Looks as if my mother was going to be more popular than ever this season. She gets all kinds of invitations and she goes out a good deal with a real young crowd."

Pollyanna knitted fast.

" My mother's awful young looking for her age," Gladys continued complacently. " But that don't help, now that I'm getting so tall. So she's telling folks that she's father's second wife."

" His second wife? " Though the implication was obvious, Pollyanna could hardly believe her ears.

" Yes, don't you see? She pretends she's our stepmother." Gladys burst into a joyous laugh, at this

indication of her mother's resourcefulness. "Lucky I don't look like her," she added, "or the boys either, for that would be a dead give-away."

Pollyanna listened with an indignation that made her afraid to trust herself to speak, while Gladys continued to brag of her mother's triumphs over certain other women, described by Gladys as "reg'lar old cats." But, as the tiresome tale went on, Pollyanna found other thoughts pricking through her resentment, like crocuses pushing their way through the chill earth into the sun. The author of the book she had just been reading was not omniscient, after all. Loyalty was not a fantastic fabrication of the sentimentalist, but inherent in the race. This untaught child, boasting of a mother who had neglected and imposed upon her, was a flat denial of the reflection on human nature that made it fundamentally and greedily selfish. As Pollyanna listened, she found herself ashamed of her late unhappy mood, which now began to seem little short of absolute disloyalty.

Late in the afternoon, after repeated false starts, Gladys succeeded in tearing herself away. "I've just got to get home," she grumbled, "or those kids will be tearing the house down, and probably the maids will pack up and leave. You don't know the time we have keeping maids, and, even when they

stay, they do just as they like. They think that I'm so young that they don't have to pay any attention to what I say, and Mother's away most of the time, or else asleep. Sometimes I get so sick of it that I feel like firing the bunch, only I don't know how to cook. Mother says they must steal right and left, and I guess they do; but, if you say anything about the bills, they go right up in the air, and it's something awful."

Her door had no sooner closed on Gladys, than Pollyanna started in to peel the onions. She had acquired every symptom of a cold in the head, when the telephone rang, and she hurried to answer it, wiping away the tears as she went. The telephone rang seldom in Pollyanna's apartment, and, even when it did ring, it was generally the wrong number, so her interrogative "Hello?" was unemotional.

"Hello!" Jimmy's hearty voice, answering back, thrilled her as if she had not heard it for months. "Have you done anything about dinner yet?"

"I'm just about starting."

"Then suppose you drop everything and meet me downtown. We'll have dinner at a restaurant and take in a show afterwards. What do you say?"

"Oh, Jimmy!" Pollyanna's first rapture was immediately tinged by doubt. "Won't it be very expensive?"

"That doesn't concern you, Mrs. Pendleton," Jimmy snubbed her. "My treat. Now listen. How soon can you be ready?"

It seemed that Pollyanna could be ready almost immediately, and, after arranging the time and place of meeting, they said good-bye. And then Pollyanna rushed to change her dress, humming a little tune, and breaking every now and then into smiles. It was so dear of Jimmy to atone for his forgetfulness of the morning in this fashion. That is, if it had been forgetfulness, rather than pique. And, even if he had left without saying good-bye because he felt vexed and irritated, she was perfectly ready to accept his apology. Only, she reflected, Jimmy must not feel that it was always necessary to make amends in this extravagant manner.

They had a wonderful evening, beginning with dinner at a little Italian restaurant, after which they saw such a thrilling movie that, though the theatre was over-warm, Pollyanna actually shivered at the climaxes of the play.

On the way home, after repeated and rather unnecessary assurances of her enjoyment of the evening, Pollyanna added tenderly, "But I don't want you to feel, dear, that, just because you forgot something, you have to make up for it by giving me a treat."

"Forget something!" Jimmy exclaimed. "What have I forgotten now?"

Pollyanna stole a glance at him. At first she could not believe that he was in earnest, but his eyes met her with frankly puzzled candor.

"Did you want me to get you something at one of the stores?" persisted Jimmy, as she did not speak. "Awfully sorry, but I don't remember a thing about it. Another time you'll have to tie a string around my little finger."

Pollyanna did not enlighten him as to the nature of his offense, but the discovery that Jimmy did not even know what he had forgotten was enlightening as to a rather fundamental difference between husbands and wives. Pollyanna went to sleep that night by no means a sadder, but decidedly a wiser, woman.

CHAPTER IX

THE STORM BREAKS

For some time following the dinner party in which Pollyanna had lent such substantial aid, affairs in the Thayer apartment ran very smoothly. The young husband was agreeably surprised at the excellence of the meal concerning which he had felt a not unreasonable doubt, and was proud of the impression his wife had made upon his old friend. And Judith had complacently accepted his praise, without in the least realizing how little she deserved it.

By this time Pollyanna's exchequer had so far recovered from the depleting visits of the Fisher family that she could consider giving a dinner party on her own account, and on this occasion Mr. and Mrs. Russell Thayer were the only guests. The more Pollyanna saw of Russell, the better she liked him. Of course any young man suffered by comparison with Jimmy, but Russell possessed an engaging boyishness which sometimes made Pollyanna feel almost motherly.

For an interval of several weeks, Judith made few of those sweeping generalizations regarding the opposite sex, which Pollyanna invariably resented. And then they broke out again, seemingly in a more virulent form because of the respite. "Men were so selfish! Men were so self-opinionated!" And one morning, with an emphasis which made her confidante extremely uncomfortable, "men were such brutes!"

Pollyanna was reasonably sure that Russell was no more a brute than Judith was a vixen. Both were quick-tempered, and both possessed a fatal inclination to argue every point on which they did not think alike. Pollyanna sometimes felt herself offensively rude, when she interrupted a discussion, which, it was clear, was only intensifying their disagreement and violently introduced a different topic of conversation. She never regarded her efforts in the direction of harmony as particularly successful, since Judith and Russell, even if prevented from pursuing the discordant theme, continued to eye each other malevolently, as they talked of the most innocent subjects.

The two young wives had agreed to do their canning and preserving together, one day in Pollyanna's kitchen, and the next in Judith's. This arrangement was advantageous to both. Judith benefited by

Pollyanna's superior knowledge, and Pollyanna, whose social temperament had difficulty in adjusting itself to long hours of solitude, found Judith's society most enlivening, even though she rendered little practical assistance.

But one morning, when Pollyanna presented herself at Judith's door, looking ridiculously like a little girl in the long-sleeved apron which was so suggestive of an old-fashioned pinafore, it was a limp and unprepossessing Judith who admitted her. Judith's hair was uncombed, and her eyes were red and swollen. As Pollyanna entered, Judith collapsed against her shoulder and sobbed.

"Oh, Judith, dear, what is it?" Pollyanna's thoughts ran the gamut of disaster, in the effort to find an explanation for this abandon of grief. And then, as Judith continued to weep without speaking, she asked tenderly, "Are you sick?"

"Sick! Yes, I am. I'm sick of everything. I'm sick of living."

"Oh!" Pollyanna felt a premonitory chill, as she realized the probable explanation of this outburst. And her foreboding was justified by Judith's next words.

"Why don't girls know when they're well off? What makes them so crazy to get married and leave

everybody who loves them and be perfectly miserable ever after?"

Pollyanna patted the heaving shoulders. "Oh, it's not as bad as that," she said cheerily.

"It is. It's worse than that. It's worse than words can say. Oh, I'm so unhappy. And how I hate men. They're so sweet till they're sure of us, and then they're so cruel!"

Pollyanna longed to suggest that there might be similar disagreeable surprises from the masculine standpoint, but she knew that this was no time for any such rejoinder. She only said soothingly, "Don't cry any more, dearie, or you'll have a headache. Go on and get your hair combed, and then we'll tackle those tomatoes."

"Tomatoes!" The suggestion had the unexpected result of drying Judith's tears at once. She snorted disdainfully. "I'm not going to bother putting up tomatoes for him to eat. I don't care if he starves."

Pollyanna winced. The lack of reticence in her own generation was always a fresh amazement to her. She could imagine Jimmy's disappointing her, wounding her, breaking her heart even; but she could not imagine herself discussing his shortcomings even with her most intimate friends. But she only said in the most unimpassioned voice she

could assume, "But you've got your tomatoes and you can't let them spoil."

"I don't care whether they spoil or not." But it was clear that Judith's nerves were responding to Pollyanna's matter-of-factness. Her voice was dull, but no longer hysterical. She lifted her head from Pollyanna's shoulder, approached the hall mirror, and gazed at her reflection with a disfavor by no means surprising.

"I look like an old witch, don't I? Well — who cares?"

"I'll start on the tomatoes, while you're getting dressed," Pollyanna replied, with carefully calculated composure. But, as she went into the kitchen and began her preparations, she was aware that the work of the morning was no longer an inviting prospect, but an ordeal to be met as courageously as possible. The tomatoes in the basket reminded her of fat, red-faced gossips, with their heads together, alert for scandal. The purring of the kettle on the range was not unlike the whispering of backbiting tongues. "Oh, dear!" thought Pollyanna, as many another has thought before her. "How easy everything would be, if you had only your own troubles to bear!"

When Judith finally made her appearance, her inclination to confidence had apparently passed. She

was dull, apathetic, automatically performing the tasks Pollyanna set her. Pollyanna's efforts to be entertaining met such a poor response that her feeling of weariness, as the hours dragged on, was due far less to her canning activities than to her desperate efforts to lift the load from Judith's spirits.

The double row of full jars, that represented their day's work, would, under ordinary circumstances, have been an occasion for mutual congratulation, but even Pollyanna regarded them aloofly, and Judith hardly seemed aware of their presence. It was not until her neighbor announced her intention of returning home that Judith roused herself from her lethargy sufficiently to say, "I'm awfully obliged for your help."

Pollyanna ignored the thanks. She put her arm about the girl's sagging figure and hugged her. "Things will look different after a little," she said.

"Oh, I don't know. I don't know!" Judith's voice broke sharply as she drew herself from her friend's embrace, and Pollyanna left her, heavy-hearted. As she entered her own apartment, she felt almost guilty at the sense of relief with which she shut herself in, and shut out the jarring world.

"Oh, how good it seems to get home! Poor Judith! When it's so easy to have peace, why do people make such misery for themselves?"

Pollyanna's unnaturally subdued manner made Jimmy suspicious on his return. With an impressive assumption of authority he demanded what she had been doing to tire herself out.

"Why, I haven't done anything to make me tired. I was at Judith's for a while, helping her can tomatoes."

"No wonder you're worn out. You do all your own work and half of hers."

"Jimmy, you're ridiculous." But, while Pollyanna pretended to scold, she thoroughly enjoyed the sense of being taken care of, a peculiarity extending to the most aggressively independent of her sex.

They passed a quiet but very happy evening, Pollyanna knitting and Jimmy reading aloud. They had intended to go to bed rather early, but the book was so fascinating that, each time Jimmy finished a chapter, they decided they must have just one more. But, when the clock struck eleven, Pollyanna resolutely laid down her work.

"Jimmy, we must stop this. I know it's an awfully exciting place to leave off, but we'll have that next chapter to look forward to all day tomorrow."

"I don't know as I dare to leave the book at home. Perhaps you'll put one over on me, and read ahead."

"Jimmy, you know I wouldn't do anything so

mean. Isn't it lucky, dear, that we like the same books?"

"Fine!" Jimmy rather spoiled the effect of enthusiasm by an explosive yawn.

"You poor boy! Here I've kept you up reading to me when you're tired to death." Pollyanna rose briskly, and went to put away her work, giving his shoulder an affectionate pat as she passed him. And at that moment the bell rang.

"Who the dickens is that, at this time of night?" Jimmy was on his feet, ready to answer his own question; but Pollyanna, moved by an impulse she did not stop to analyze, caught his sleeve. "Wait, Jimmy, please Let me answer it."

Her intuition had not been at fault. The late caller was not downstairs in the vestibule, but waiting just outside the door. It was, as Pollyanna had somehow known, Judith — Judith dressed for the street, travelling bag in one hand, and umbrella in the other.

"Pollyanna, I'm going home, the first thing in the morning. May I stay with you tonight?"

Pollyanna pulled her friend into the hall and closed the door behind her. Her lips asked nothing, but her eyes were full of distressed questioning.

"Yes, I've left him." Judith's voice was unnatu-

rally shrill. "I've stood all I can. Of course if you don't want me, Pollyanna ——"

Pollyanna opened the door of her little guest room.

"Come in, dear," she said, her voice unsteady. "Of course I want you, only — Oh, Judith, it's so terrible!"

Pollyanna was on the verge of tears, but Judith had an air of unnatural exhilaration. She put down her travelling bag, leaned her umbrella against the wall, and began to remove her wraps, talking rapidly as she did so.

"No, this isn't terrible, Pollyanna. It's a wonderful relief. That chapter in my life is closed. I'm going home to the people who really love me ——"

"But Russell cares for you, Judith. I know he's quick-tempered, and probably lots of times he says things he doesn't mean; but anybody can see he loves you dearly."

"Love!" Judith laughed unpleasantly. "Men don't know the meaning of the word. All they love is themselves."

It was no time to speak in defense of the sex to which Jimmy belonged. Pollyanna said nothing, though her silence cost her an effort. Judith, who was in that high-strung condition which renders certain temperaments almost garrulous, continued, "I'm going down town first thing tomorrow and

telegraph home for money to pay my railroad fare. Of course I haven't enough. He's always doled out the money I needed for the house, even, as if he hated to part with it. Men's economy begins and ends with their wives and their homes, I've noticed. It never applies to themselves."

Pollyanna closed the bedroom door and wished she had thought of it earlier. But Judith was too excited, and too absorbed in her own grievances, to realize the significance of the action.

"What I'm sorry for is that I've stood it so long. I knew almost from the start what a fearful mistake I'd made; but I was too proud to acknowledge it. But it's silly to condemn yourself to life-long misery just on account of your pride. Let people say what they please — I don't care."

Again Pollyanna assumed the matter-of-fact air she had already found useful in quieting Judith's excitement.

"Have you everything you are going to need for the night?" she asked as composedly as if Judith had been an ordinary guest. "Now, I'm not going to call you for an early breakfast. You'd better sleep as long as you can." She put her arms about Judith and kissed the cheek which felt feverishly hot to her lips. "Goodnight, dear."

She saw, as she reached her own room, that ex-

planations were quite unnecessary as far as Jimmy was concerned. Judith's voice had penetrated to the remotest corner of the little apartment. Jimmy wore a reflective frown, which, on Pollyanna's entrance, he tried to change to a look of sympathy.

"Oh, Jimmy!" Pollyanna sighed, thankful to be spared the necessity of explaining the arrival of this uninvited guest. "Isn't it terrible?"

"Yes." Jimmy seemed in doubt whether to go on or not. Then he decided to add, "It's terrible, but it's not as one-sided as she thinks."

"No, I'm sure it isn't. There's lots of good in Russell. Of course you can see his faults. He does like to have his own way. I've often thought if he'd only pattern after you ——"

"Pattern after me?" Jimmy interrupted, in seeming amazement. "Why, the difference between Russell and me isn't enough to speak of. But I've often wondered why Judith didn't pattern after you. She nags, Pollyanna, and a man has to be something more than flesh and blood to stand a nagging woman. And if they don't agree on a subject, she's bound to keep on talking about it, till it gets to the point where he can't stand it any longer, and then he breaks loose, and says what he's probably ashamed of a half a minute later. If I was in Russell's place, I'd be worse than he is, I'm sure. And if Russell was in

mine, I don't doubt that he'd be a model. When I think of that poor devil, and then realize how lucky I am, ——"

It was a rather long speech for Jimmy, and he broke off abruptly to take Pollyanna in his arms. And Pollyanna, nestling against his heart, wondered if it was wrong to be so happy when, just across the little hall, there was heart-ache and misery.

CHAPTER X

THE SUBLIME AND THE RIDICULOUS

JUDITH was not astir early next morning, completing her arrangements to leave the city. True to her promise Pollyanna did not waken her. She tiptoed about softly, as she prepared breakfast, and she and Jimmy conversed in whispers over their oatmeal, and, contrary to her custom, Pollyanna did not go to the door to see him off. After his departure she went on with such of her morning tasks as could be dispatched without undue noise, and listened as she worked for signs of life in her little guest room.

At ten o'clock a faint voice spoke her name. Pollyanna, hurrying to answer the summons, was shocked at the pallor of the face that gazed up at her from the pillow. There were dark circles under Judith's eyes, so that they looked unnaturally large, and her lips, even, were a chalky white.

"Pollyanna," Judith said faintly, "I'm awfully sorry, but I don't believe I can get up this morning. I — I feel so sick."

Pollyanna straightened the rumpled bed covers.

"Just lie quiet, Judith. You'll feel better after a little. Perhaps a cup of coffee would brace you up."

"Oh, no!" The mere suggestion was too much for Judith. Her pallor was replaced by a sickly greenish hue and she closed her eyes. Pollyanna, regretting her indiscretion, busied herself with setting the disordered room to rights, lowered the shade to keep out the obtrusive sunbeams, and then stole away, leaving the door ajar. She was relieved by the certainty that Judith could not start for home immediately. Already Pollyanna had discovered that many disasters are irrevocable, merely because people do not give themselves time to cool off.

Along in the afternoon Judith was able to eat a little, but she did not feel equal to leaving her bed, and the evening was quite different from that which her hosts had anticipated. Jimmy, it is true, read several chapters from the book which had so fascinated them twenty-four hours earlier; but it did not have the same effect. Pollyanna was constantly interrupting him to go into Judith's room on one pretext or another, and even while she sat beside him, apparently engrossed in the story, he was perfectly aware that her thoughts were wandering to the unhappy wife who had thrown herself on their hospitality. As a matter of fact, Jimmie did not

read as well as usual, for the reason that his own thoughts were quite unmanageable.

The following day Judith dragged herself out of bed along about noon, and suggested half-heartedly that now she was well enough to carry out the program she had outlined when she first presented herself at Pollyanna's door. Pollyanna vetoed the idea emphatically.

"You're not going out of this house today. You're not fit to exert yourself, and certainly you're not fit to travel. Suppose you should feel as ill on the train as you did yesterday. There's no reason in the world why you shouldn't stay here till you feel quite like yourself."

Judith hesitated. "If I stay, Pollyanna, you must promise me something."

"What am I to promise?" Pollyanna asked. But she guessed the answer and her heart sank.

"You mustn't try to make me take back what I've said. My mind's made up like the laws of the Medes and Persians — or whatever it was that couldn't be changed. And I can't stand it to argue about the affair. I'd rather start for home, if I knew I was going to die on the way."

Again her voice showed signs of hysteria, and Pollyanna reluctantly gave the desired promise. "I

won't say anything about it, unless you feel like talking it over with me ——"

"There's nothing to talk over, Pollyanna. It's settled forever and ever, and the least said the better."

Pollyanna fully agreed with the closing sentence, though she would have amended it to the form, "The least said the sooner mended."

She noticed uneasily that, in spite of her emphatically expressed opinion, Judith wrote several very long letters that afternoon, which Pollyanna was reasonably sure contained a full account of her domestic difficulties. Apparently Judith's idea was that she was to be free to say whatever she pleased, while the least said on the other side, the better. But Pollyanna's promise rendered her helpless, and she saw her stationery melting away, with a regret quite independent of the fact that it was a birthday present from Jimmy, bearing her monogram, and reserved for very especial occasions.

The third day of Judith's stay found her little improved. Pollyanna asked no questions, but she was sure from the girl's appearance that she had hardly slept. She presented herself at the breakfast table and ate almost nothing. She insisted on assisting Pollyanna with her household tasks, though her jaded air, as she moved wearily about the rooms,

tired Pollyanna more than all the work she would do in a week. She had never found it more difficult to be cheerful than now. Every time she looked at Judith's pale face, her heart was wrung by a spasm of pity that frequently brought the tears stinging to her eyes. The only thing Pollyanna could find in the whole situation to be glad about was the fact that Judith had not as yet left the city. And as long as she and Russell were separated only by a partition wall — a thin partition at that, for it was quite possible to hear in one apartment any unusual sound in that adjoining — Pollyanna clung obstinately to the hope of a reconciliation.

That evening, however, fresh complications arose. For the first time, Jimmy showed signs of becoming restive. Pollyanna was reasonably sure that the indications of dissatisfaction would not be apparent to eyes less keen than her own, but the realization that Jimmy and herself were not agreed, where Judith was concerned, carried dismay to her heart. She racked her brains for a tactful way of approaching the subject, as a preliminary to bringing Jimmy around to her way of thinking, but, when they were alone together that evening, he saved her the trouble.

"How much longer is your friend going to stay?"

"Sh! Why, Jimmy, I'm hoping that, if she stays a little longer, they'll make up."

"Meanwhile she's a good deal like the death's head the old Romans used to have at their feasts. They evidently thought it added to the gaiety of the occasion, but I'll be hanged if I can get their point of view."

"Sh! Of course she's unhappy, Jimmy. Wouldn't you despise her if she could be cheerful? Think if something had come between you and me, and I was starting to go back to Aunt Polly."

Jimmy looked at his wife's earnest face, and surprised her by bursting into a shout of laughter. Then, with an effort to resume his injured manner, he said sulkily, "It's rather hard on us, though, when we've got the sense to behave ourselves, and not start to pulling each other's hair every time we don't think alike, to have Judith glowering around the house indefinitely."

"Oh, but it won't be indefinitely. That is, it can't be very long. Either they will have a reconciliation, or else she'll go home." And Pollyanna sighed so heavily, as she faced the latter contingency, that Jimmy forgot his grievance in his effort to comfort her.

Jimmy, if possible, slept more soundly than Pollyanna herself, and when, during the night, he opened his eyes, to see his wife sitting bolt upright in bed, his sluggish brain reached the conclusion that it must

be morning. "Time to get up?" he asked drowsily.

"Jimmy, did you hear it?"

"Hear what?" Jimmy's tone indicated that he was fully awake by now.

"I don't exactly know. It sounded to me like a shot."

"You've been dreaming," Jimmy was beginning, with a husband's invariable instinct to prove his wife's fears groundless. But, before he could continue, from the hall outside came a wailing cry, "Pollyanna!"

Pollyanna flew to answer the call, while Jimmy leaped out of bed and began to dress. Some instinct warned him that his services would soon be required.

Pollyanna found Judith standing in the doorway of her room, her face bloodless, and her eyes protruding, as if she had seen something unutterably horrifying. She hurried to her side, too shocked by her appearance to dare to ask questions. It was Judith who spoke.

"Oh, Pollyanna, did you hear it?"

"Hear what?" For the life of her Pollyanna could not raise her voice above a whisper.

"Shots, two of them. Pollyanna, he's shot himself and I'm to blame."

"Judith!" Pollyanna's head whirled. She had a paralyzing fear that she was going to faint, and she

took a tight grip on her self-control. "What — makes — you —think ——" she began, speaking each separate word as if it were a heavy weight, the lifting of which required all her strength.

"I've been lying awake, and I heard two shots, and I know they were in our apartment. He's killed himself, I tell you. I was always so afraid of that revolver," Judith moaned, "even though it wasn't loaded. He loved me, Pollyanna, and I left him and now — now I'll never see him again."

With the last words Judith seemed to crumble. She dropped at Pollyanna's feet in a faint. Pollyanna made no effort to revive her, for she realized that if Judith had been right in her conjecture, quick action might save Russell's life. People who tried to commit suicide were not always successful.

She rushed to Jimmy with the story, which, tragic as it was, could be told in half a dozen words. "Judith thinks Russell has shot himself."

"Did she bring her latch key?" Jimmy asked. And in all her distress, Pollyanna felt a thrill of pride in his steadying composure.

"I don't know; I'll see."

She ran to her guest room, stepping over Judith's body, which practically barred the entrance, and emptied the contents of Judith's pocket-book upon the dressing table. There was a key-ring and on the

ring a key which Pollyanna recognized as the latch-key to the next door apartment. Jimmy was at the door, as she brought it out, his young face grimly determined.

"Do you want me to go with you?" Pollyanna whispered, her teeth chattering as she thought of the sight Jimmy might see.

"Good heavens, no! Can't you do something for her?"

"I'll try," Pollyanna answered. She brought water from the bathroom, and sprinkled it on Judith's face, but, when the girl stirred and moaned, she had a sudden conviction that she had been cruel in bringing her friend back to the torture of her accusing thoughts.

Judith's heavy lids lifted. She stared up at Pollyanna wildly. "What has happened? What am I doing here?"

"You fainted, dear. As soon as you can help yourself a little, I'll try to get you to the bed."

Languidly Judith raised herself into a sitting posture, and Pollyanna put her arms about her, and lifted her to her feet. The journey across the little room seemed endlessly long, and, just before they reached the bed, the thing happened which Pollyanna had been dreading. Judith remembered.

"Oh ——" Her slender body writhed as if stung

by excruciating pain. She fell across the bed, and lay on her face, clenching her fists, and shaken by long-drawn sobs. "Russell! Oh my poor boy! Is he — is he — dead?"

"Jimmy's gone to your apartment," Pollyanna whispered. "He took your key. He'll come back soon and tell us."

Judith did not answer, and there was nothing more for Pollyanna to say. For an ordinary grief she might have found words of consolation, but what comfort was possible for a sorrow like this? As she waited, listening for the sound of Jimmy's footsteps, she heard only Judith's sobs and the noisy beating of her own heart.

Her rigid attention must have wavered after a time, without her being conscious of it, for she did not hear Jimmy enter. Her first intimation of his return was when he spoke her name, and at once she clapped her hands to her mouth, to keep from shrieking.

"Pollyanna," Jimmy repeated gently, and then, as she staggered into the hall, he put his hands upon her shoulder. "Go to the other room," he said. "No, Judith will be all right. Just do as I tell you."

Mechanically Pollyanna obeyed, and then, from the door of her own room, she looked back and saw Russell's eager face as he stood outside, waiting for

Jimmy to give him the signal to enter. Pollyanna dropped into a convenient chair, feeling limp all over, and struggled to keep back her tears.

Jimmy followed her almost immediately. He did not look at her nor speak, but sat down on the edge of the bed, and covered his face with his hands. For an instant Pollyanna experienced an agony of sympathy, all the more poignant because she could not guess the explanation of his emotion. Then, with a revulsion of feeling which flared up into hot anger, she realized that he was convulsed by silent laughter.

When Jimmy had had his laugh out, and wiped his wet eyes, he looked across the room at the white, set face, which gave no indication of relaxing in response to his humorous gaze. Jimmy blinked and looked again. He had seen Pollyanna angry on rare occasions in the course of their acquaintance, but never before had he seen her angry at him.

Having satisfied himself as to what ailed his wife, Jimmy began to realize that, from her point of view, his outbreak of mirth had been without excuse. Pollyanna had been braced to hear the details of a tragedy, and instead he had given himself up to laughter. He could not blame her, and yet he was unable to see, for the life of him, how he could have helped himself.

"Pollyanna," he said humbly, "I beg your pardon for laughing."

Pollyanna tilted her chin and made no reply. To his astonishment he perceived that she was like other young women, after all, capable of being thoroughly unreasonable.

"I suppose," continued Jimmy dolefully, "that it was the reaction that made it seem so excruciatingly funny. I was keyed up for the worst, you know, and then those infernal tomatoes ——"

"What?"

"I forgot you didn't know. Yes, Pollyanna, the shots you heard were those pesky jars going off. The noise had wakened Russell and, when I got to the door, I could hear him moving around, and I knocked instead of using the latch key."

He cast an oblique glance in Pollyanna's direction. He thought her face had lost a little of its severity, but could not be sure.

"Then he let me in, and I told him that we'd heard shooting and Judith was so frightened that she had fainted away. He didn't even know she was with us, you see, and that got him." Jimmy looked at Pollyanna again, and congratulated himself on having said the right thing.

"Russell was investigating when I knocked, and we kept on looking all over the place. After a while

we discovered those tomatoes. The jars had been standing right in the sun, and I imagine the covers weren't on tight enough. Anyway they got to fermenting and blew up. The table and the walls were all spattered with red stuff, and, when I saw it, I just doubled up laughing. I suppose I ought to be kicked," said Jimmy penitently, " but I just couldn't help it."

Pollyanna made a quick movement, suggestive of dissent.

" Well, then, Russell and I had a talk. He'd taken it for granted that Judith had gone home when she said she was going, and when I told him how she'd been with us, and sick besides, he was pretty well broken up. Then I remarked that, in my opinion, the stage was set for a reconciliation. Of course he started to say that she didn't care a rap about him, but I soon stopped that. ' Tell that to the marines,' I said. ' She's pretty near crazy because she is afraid you are hurt, or she was till she fainted away.' And then he began to do a little sniveling himself and I knew I had him where I wanted him."

" Oh, Jimmy! " Pollyanna's voice indicated admiration blended with self-reproach, but Jimmy did not look in her direction.

" I didn't give him a chance to think it over. I took him by the arm and said, ' Come along with me.

My wife's been nursing your wife for several days, but it's my belief that she won't be cured till Dr. Russell is called in.'"

Jimmy felt a touch on his arm, and turned to look into Pollyanna's brimming eyes. And, though not a word of penitence was spoken on either side, in the kiss they exchanged, they both asked and gave forgiveness.

In the morning the door of Pollyanna's guest room stood wide open and Judith's clothing and travelling bag and umbrella, had magically vanished. Pinned to the pillow was a note, in pencil, on the reverse side of an old envelope.

"I can never thank you enough for your kindness, Pollyanna, darling. It's all because of you that we're happy again. Russell says that he thinks Jimmy is the most lucky man in the world, except himself, but I know that Jimmy is a million times luckier. With all my love.

"Judith.

"P.S. Wasn't it too killing about the tomatoes?"

CHAPTER XI

PANDORA'S BOX

THANKS to Aunt Polly's extravagant ideas as to what a trousseau should include, Pollyanna's shopping, during the first few months of her married life, had been confined almost entirely to articles for the house. Pollyanna had never outgrown the thrill of such expeditions. Whether she patronized a five-and-ten-cent store, as she frequently did, or visited the imposing house furnishing departments of the big stores, where fine aluminum ware was on display, as dazzling as silver and almost as costly, she experienced a pleasure she had never dreamed of in making purchases for herself. And in this she was only following nature's well-established precedent. Even a bird will pluck out its feathers to make its nest more cosy and complete.

But even the most absorbed young housekeeper must occasionally put her personal needs before the need of kitchen utensils. And, with the first frost, Pollyanna waked up to a lack in her wardrobe, which, in a smaller town, she would probably have

thought of earlier. "I must get myself a hat this week," she remarked to Jimmy at breakfast one morning. "I suppose I'm the only woman in New York who is still wearing a straw."

"You are?" Jimmy exclaimed. He seemed quite disturbed by the suggestion. "Of course every man took off his straw hat weeks ago, but you women have such queer ideas about times and seasons, that I just left it to you."

Pollyanna laughed at his worried air. "It doesn't matter very much," she said, "as long as the society reporters aren't likely to mention that Mrs. James Pendleton attended church elegantly attired in her last spring's hat. Nobody notices anybody here."

"That's not the point," frowned Jimmy. "Mrs. James Pendleton ought to be suitably dressed whether anybody notices it or not." He was plainly vexed, and paradoxically Pollyanna gloated over his displeasure. Jimmy was so uniformly amiable that it flattered her to have him curt in his speech and abrupt in manner, simply because she had been a laggard about adjusting her apparel to the changes of season. When Jimmy looked up from his toast, her face was so radiant that he stared.

"Well, what's the matter now?" he demanded. "Haven't I made it sufficiently clear that you're getting a scolding?"

"Yes, indeed," Pollyanna dimpled back. "It's perfectly plain you're cross."

Jimmy shook his head in mock despair. "This is a pretty state of affairs. How's a man to be master in his own house, if every time he scolds his wife, she beams at him as if he'd just made her a present. What's the idea?"

But Pollyanna refused to explain the secret of her good humor, though she softened her refusal by offering him another cup of coffee, and putting in it an extra lump of sugar. And, after Jimmy's departure, she dispatched her morning's work with an alacrity born of blithe spirits. Even a husband's frown might be an occasion for gladness, Pollyanna assured herself, if it were due to his pride in her.

She had not the slightest intention of buying her hat till Saturday, when Jimmy's salary was due, and when she would receive her allowance for the forthcoming four weeks. But, on her way to the market, she passed a little millinery shop in whose window she had often noticed hats that impressed her favorably. It would do no harm, Pollyanna decided, to look the stock over.

While Pollyanna was far from beautiful in the conventional sense, the charm of her face depending on its vivacity and sweetness, rather than on regularity of feature, she had an unusual faculty for

knowing just what suited her. An instinct as unerring as that which guides a young bird to the southland it has never seen taught her what to avoid. Once inside the little shop her gaze went from shelf to shelf and finally focussed on a small and simple hat of dark blue, its only trimming a cocky velvet bow.

"I believe that would be becoming. May I try it on, please? I can't buy a hat today," explained Pollyanna conscientiously, "because I haven't enough money with me, but I expect to get one on Saturday."

The pleasant young clerk obligingly brought out the hat indicated, and, when it had replaced Pollyanna's shabby tan straw, the clerk's professional enthusiasm warmed to something nearly human. "That looks awfully well on you," she declared.

"Yes, doesn't it?" Pollyanna gazed at her reflection with tempered admiration. "I knew it would suit me as soon as I saw it."

"You might try on a few others," suggested the saleswoman, becoming professional again. "We have some very pretty hats, copied from French models, at less than half their price."

Pollyanna accommodatingly tried several hats without duplicating the pleasant impression made by her first choice, and left at length with a satis-

fied certainty that her winter shopping was practically over, as far as her personal needs were concerned. The price of the little blue hat was not beyond her modest purse, and it was so satisfactory that she did not see the point of looking any further. Pollyanna was not so fond of shopping as to care to make her need of a new hat an excuse for visiting twenty shops and putting twenty clerks to unnecessary labor. She had found what she liked and that was enough.

Pollyanna's mood of unimpaired cheerfulness outlasted the daylight. It even stood the test of Jimmy's being late to dinner, which is, perhaps, as severe a trial to the equanimity of the housewife, who is also the cook, as has yet been devised. But, as she watched the clock and turned the gas lower and still lower, that the food might keep warm without completely drying up, she hummed a little tune, and thought complacently how Jimmy would admire the blue hat.

She heard at last the sound of his key in the latch, and rushed out to give him a welcome tempered with reproof. But, at the first sight of him, she halted, and took a quick step backward. Jimmy was carrying a most unusual package, a large round box, striped black and white like a zebra. There was no possibility of mistake. It was a milliner's box.

Pollyanna stood gazing at it with distended eyes.

In many ways she had absolute confidence in Jimmy. If the president had suddenly asked him to accept a seat in the cabinet, she might have wondered how officialdom had so early recognized his worth, but she would not have doubted his ability to make a success of the position. That was one thing, however, and the thing that Jimmy had apparently attempted was another. The smile froze on Pollyanna's lips.

Jimmy hung up his overcoat, crossed the hall, and enveloped her in an exultant hug. "May I ask what you are staring at, Mrs. Pendleton? Haven't I a right to do a little shopping for myself without having my wife make eyes at me?"

"What is it, Jimmy?" Pollyanna wondered if by any possibility the men's furnishing stores had adopted the picturesque boxes first affected by the millinery trade.

"Open it, and see."

The answer confirmed her worst fears. Smiling resolutely she went to do his bidding. She rallied her courage by the reflection that, when they were buying their furniture, Jimmy's taste had practically coincided with hers. She reinforced the feeble hope born of this recollection by telling herself that Jimmy showed the best of taste in selecting his own ties. But, for all these brave thoughts, her

fingers trembled as they clumsily fumbled with the string.

There was a hat in the box, an extremely large hat, of a lifeless shade of plum-colored velvet, over-heavy, over-trimmed. Pollyanna's unerring instinct told her that, if Jimmy had searched the metropolis to find a hat which would be most unbecoming to herself, he could hardly have improved on his performance. For one agonizing moment she thought that her gasp of horror must have betrayed her. Then she realized that a mere catching of the breath has nothing to differentiate it. A gasp of horror might easily be mistaken for a gasp of ecstasy.

Forcing her stiff lips into a smile, Pollyanna took the hat from the box, and as she did so, a printed card fluttered out and fell at her feet. "For obvious reasons," it read, "hats will not be exchanged." In her present mood it seemed a taunt.

She realized she must say something. "Oh, Jimmy," she murmured. That at least was safe. And then she went on, feeling her way. "How dear of you!"

"Some hat, isn't it?" Jimmy regarded his choice with complacency. "That gilt whatever-you-call it at the side sets it off, doesn't it?"

The ornament to which Jimmy referred had

already suggested to Pollyanna the epaulets formerly worn by major-generals. Avoiding a direct reply, she asked a question altogether safe, "How did you come to think of it?"

Jimmy was delighted to reply, "Well, I was annoyed because you hadn't bought yourself a hat when you needed one. And, when I started home tonight, it occurred to me to stop at one of the big stores and see what they had. A peach of a girl waited on me, and she tried on different hats so that I could get the effect."

Pollyanna was conscious of immediate resentment toward the "peach of a girl," not because of Jimmy's open admiration, but because she had taken advantage of his ignorance. "I suppose she was one of the big showy sort," thought Pollyanna with an indignation that it was essential to conceal. "Who could wear a dishpan turned upside down and trimmed with a feather duster, and not look very bad? She might have taken the trouble to ask him what sort of a looking person *I* was."

She was dreading the moment when Jimmy should ask her to try the hat on. It seemed a foregone conclusion that, when he saw her wearing the atrocity he had selected, the full tragedy of the situation would at once be apparent, and, as she turned it in her hands, with a fixed attention which might be

interpreted as admiration, the question she was dreading came, "Why don't you put it on?"

"Which — which is the front?" The inquiry was purely a ruse to gain time, but Jimmy looked puzzled.

"Hanged if I know. But I remember that when the girl put it on that feather curled down under her ear."

"Oh, yes, I see." Pollyanna walked to the mirror like a martyr advancing to the stake, adjusted the hat at an angle which brought the variegated plume curling ticklishly under her right ear, and waited for the explosion. Jimmy put his hands in his pockets and looked her over with an expression of fatuous complacency.

"Hats are going to be worn large this year," he said authoritatively, evidently quoting the saleswoman, whose good looks had so impressed him. "But I don't believe you'll find many larger than that."

"I'm sure of it," declared Pollyanna, animatedly. That at least she could say with perfect truth. It was not likely that a larger hat would be worn by anybody, certainly not by women just five feet two.

"I think it should be tipped over the right eye a little more," corrected Jimmy. "Yes, that's it." He

interrupted his observations to sniff interrogatively. "Anything burning?"

"My dinner!" Pollyanna rushed to the rescue of her forgotten vegetables without stopping to remove the velvet hat, and for some minutes presented a most unique appearance, turning the mashed potatoes from one saucepan into another while the tip of the fantastically colored plume carelessly tickled her ear. Then, having saved her meal from destruction, she returned the hat to its box, and put on dinner. There were fewer mashed potatoes than she had planned for, owing to the fact that the bottom layer had scorched, but that evening Pollyanna did not care for much potato, nor, if the truth be told, for much of anything.

Often when Pollyanna and Jimmy were alone, she chattered almost incessantly, till she had told him everything that had happened since she had seen him last, but on this particular evening Jimmy held the floor, stimulated to unwonted brilliancy by his wife's absorbed attention. Yet, while she gazed at Jimmy, and heard the greater part of what he was saying, the undercurrent of her thoughts ran along a very different channel. She tried to find consolation in the remembrance that some people put on spring hats in February. She had always thought it a very silly custom, and had disliked the effect of spring hats

atop of winter coats, emphasizing, by their very incongruity, the bleakness of the season. But now she looked forward impatiently to February, and the chance to escape from the domination of the plum-colored velvet.

She tried it on again next morning, after Jimmy had gone, with a grim determination to know the worst. And the worst was very bad indeed. The hat, tasteless and ugly in itself, was of a style utterly unsuited to Pollyanna, and even her clear complexion took on a sallow look against the trying shade of the velvet. With the aid of a hand-mirror Pollyanna studied her reflection from all angles, and counted up the weeks till February.

"I suppose I've got to resign myself to going around looking like a fright," groaned Pollyanna. It was not an agreeable prospect for a young wife, with a full share of the love a normal human being possesses for pretty and becoming clothes. "But I'm sure this hat cost a lot, and I couldn't afford another, even if it wasn't for hurting Jimmy's feelings. It was so dear of him. There never was anybody like Jimmy."

When Pandora's box was opened, letting loose innumerable ills to plague humanity, hope remained for our consolation. And if the striped milliner's box, on the shelf of Pollyanna's closet, had proved a

Pandora's box in miniature, there was one joy which had not flown away. The thought of Jimmy's care for her and pride in her was sufficient antidote to her momentary depression. Though the tears started to her eyes, they were tears of pure joy.

"I suppose there are lots of women whose husbands don't care how they look and grudge them every penny they spend for themselves. Of course I'm sorry Jimmy bought this particular hat, but — but I'm glad he wanted to."

They went out more than usual that next week. Most young couples, no matter how thrifty and sensible, go out more than usual the first week after the monthly pay day. On Saturday night they celebrated by tickets to a real concert. They were perfectly agreed on their love for music, and Pollyanna's spirits soared like a bird above all sordid things. It was not till they were home again that Jimmy startled her by a brusque question.

"Pollyanna, aren't you feeling well?"

Pollyanna turned her astonished face toward him. They were still discussing the program they had heard, and she had not yet removed her wraps.

"Me?" she exclaimed. "Why, of course I feel well. Why did you ask me that?"

"Because I don't think you're looking well. I

noticed you in the street cars tonight, and — well, it gave me a sort of shock."

Pollyanna was beginning to understand. In his first enthusiasm over his purchase, Jimmy, when he looked at her, had seen only the magnificence of the over-showy hat. But, now that he was becoming sufficiently familiar with its splendor, so that it no longer arrested his eyes, once again he was able to see his wife.

"Seems to me your face looked rather pinched," Jimmy continued. "I believe you've lost weight, and your color isn't as good as it was, or — well, anyway, something's wrong."

Pollyanna could no longer contain herself. Had it been left to her choice, nothing could have induced her to be guilty of the thing she immediately proceeded to do. But it was one of the times when the will is impotent. An uncontrollable titter forced its way between her compressed lips, a sound insignificant in itself, but, like a trickle of water in a dyke, foretelling doom. Pollyanna dropped into the nearest chair in an agony of laughter.

With an exclamation Jimmy jumped to his feet. His brief apprehension was not unnatural for nothing in Pollyanna's appearance indicated merriment. As a matter of fact, she felt anything but merry. Laughter may be as painful as the tooth-ache, and

Pollyanna, writhing in the grip of a paroxysm that squeezed the breath out of her lungs, wiped away tears of actual suffering.

Jimmy gazed at her incredulously. "For heaven's sake!" he burst out, after he had satisfied himself that she was really laughing and not the victim of some neuralgic seizure, "What's so funny?"

Pollyanna continued to laugh in the same helpless fashion, and Jimmy ran his fingers through his hair, "Rather selfish," he commented resentfully, "to have a joke like that, and not share it with your lawful husband."

Pollyanna moaned slightly, and again struggled for self-control. The big hat, over-balanced by the weight of the plume, and an enormous velvet bow, tore itself from her head, despite the restraining hat-pins, and dropped to the floor. Jimmy made a quick movement as if to recover it, and then choked himself abruptly. He stood looking at his wife with the most fixed attention.

Pollyanna's paroxysm passed as suddenly as it had come on. All at once she stopped laughing and felt as if nothing in the world could ever make her laugh again. Her depleted lungs filled. The pain in her side became less excruciating. She wiped her eyes,

avoiding Jimmy's gaze. How in the world was she to explain!

"Pollyanna," Jimmy challenged her, "what about that hat?"

Pollyanna gasped and failed to answer.

"Now that it's off, it seems to me you look — well, different. Is anything wrong with that hat?"

Pollyanna might try to hide disappointment from her husband, but she could not lie to him. "I think, perhaps," she said in a faint voice, "the reason my face looked pinched to you is because the hat is rather large. I'm a pretty small person, you see."

"Hm!"

"And there are some shades that make me look rather sallow. I guess this is one."

Jimmy walked across the room and back again. Then he whistled a few lines from one of the selections they had enjoyed that evening. Pollyanna, glancing at him apprehensively, lest she should see chagrin written on his face, was unutterably relieved to have him look up and smile at her.

"Live and learn, Pollyanna," said Jimmy. "Let's make a bargain. I won't buy you any more hats, if you won't buy me any more neckties."

Pollyanna looked alarmed. "Now, Jimmy, if you mean that plaid one, the salesman said ——"

"Salesmen are frequently liars," remarked Jimmy sententiously.

"And peaches of saleswomen are sometimes more anxious to make a sale than to suit the style of somebody they never saw."

Jimmy came over to her and kissed her. "All right," he said. "Let's call it a draw."

CHAPTER XII

AN EXCUSE FOR A CHRISTMAS TREE

POLLYANNA'S preparations for the first Christmas of her married life were extremely modest. Even if Jimmy's salary had been twice as large as it really was, she could not have brought herself to have spent lavishly for non-essentials, when across the sea, where the great war was raging, thousands of children were suffering for the necessities of life. Pollyanna suggested to Jimmy that they two should omit an exchange of gifts, but, to her surprise, he repudiated the suggestion with scorn.

"No, I won't do it, Pollyanna, and you might as well drop it. This is our first Christmas in our own home, and if you think I'm going to celebrate by passing up your present, you'll have to guess again."

"But I don't need anything more, Jimmy. That's just the point. Think of my wedding presents. Think of all this darling brand-new furniture that's yours and mine. And, even without any of these things," concluded Pollyanna, gazing at him with an expression flattering to his vanity, "I've had enough this year to satisfy the greediest woman."

Without question Jimmy knew exactly what she meant. Whatever his lacks, no one could accuse him of being slow of wit. But, because he wanted the satisfaction of hearing her say it, he looked blank. "What do you mean by that?"

"You stupid boy! You, of course."

"Oh, is that all?"

"All!" Pollyanna's inflection made the monosyllable very impressive. She looked down at her wedding ring, a narrow little circlet, shining on her left hand, and then put the hand against her cheek. "Such a wonderful year!" she sighed. "Of course it hasn't been nearly a year yet. I wonder if the next six months can possibly be as glad as these have been."

Jimmy did not meet her eye. For a moment she had the impression that a shadow had eclipsed the brightness of his face, but the idea was so unreasonable that she promptly dismissed it. Then, though he still looked away, he reiterated his previous assertion. "It's our first Christmas in our own home and we're going to keep it with all the frills. I shall buy you the nicest present I can afford, and I shall expect you to do the same by me."

Pollyanna wondered if Jimmy's idea of "frills" included a Christmas tree, and paradoxically she was both relieved and disappointed when her tact-

ful questioning revealed that he did not regard it as indispensable. To Pollyanna, herself, the tree was almost the paramount feature of a Christmas celebration. She did not care in the least whether it was small enough to stand in a flower pot, or tall enough to brush the ceiling. The thing that was important was the tree itself, green and spicy, and irresistible in its holiday dress. Had Pollyanna been only six, instead of her actual advanced age, she could not have felt a keener longing for a Christmas tree.

"It will be a splendid way to save money," mused Pollyanna, trying hard to be practical. "Of course the tree doesn't cost so much, but the ornaments count up. And when you haven't much money, it's silly to spend any of it for tinsel and little colored balls."

Of course that should have settled the question, and yet, when Pollyanna thought of Christmas, she was conscious at once of a hollow feeling, as if something were missing. Each time it took her a minute to trace that feeling to its source, and realize that it was occasioned by the fact that no Christmas tree was included in her plans for the forthcoming holiday.

One evening, about a week before Christmas, Pollyanna and Jimmy,, returning home from a

branch post-office, where they had stood in line a full hour, stopped before one of the show windows of a large store, less to enjoy the display than to watch the assembled crowd. The window had been given over entirely to a Christmas scene. There was a fireplace, with full stockings dangling in line, a benevolent Santa Claus with an overflowing pack, and, over in the corner, a Christmas tree. The crowd was made up of even more adults than children, and so many of the faces were wistful that Pollyanna felt a stabbing pain at her heart.

"Just look at that old man," she whispered to Jimmy. "I don't believe he ever had a Christmas tree, and he wants one. Poor dear!"

Jimmy surveyed the weary, bearded old face with hardly less sympathy. "Perhaps he used to have Christmas trees when he was a little chap," he said, "and this brings back the memory of everything he has lost, his mother and all the rest. Pretty tough."

A piping voice called their attention from weary age to eager youth. "That tree's real, Joey," a small voice was informing his brother. "Once it growed in the ground, didn't it, Ma?"

"Sure it did," a voice replied, and Pollyanna turned quickly. "Why," she cried with a pleasure inevitable on meeting an old friend, "it's Lizzie."

A shabby young woman, who stood just back of

the two boys, looked up. Her puzzled eyes scanned Pollyanna for a moment, and then her rather sullen expression softened. "Oh, it's you, ma'am," she said. "Good-evening."

"This is my husband, Lizzie," beamed Pollyanna, while Jimmy lifted his hat. "And are these your children?"

"Yes, ma'am, they're mine." The young woman straightened Joey's cap with a little jerk, but, under her brooding look, one glimpsed an expression of tenderness, like the sun sending out its rays from behind dark clouds.

"What nice-looking boys! I didn't know you had children, Lizzie. I suppose they can hardly wait till Christmas."

"I guess this is as much Christmas as they're likely to get," the mother replied grimly. "It's hard enough nowadays to buy food for 'em to eat, and keep 'em in decent clothes, without spending money for playthings." She hesitated, and then, as if impelled by something in Pollyanna's sympathetic attention, continued, "My husband deserted me when Joey was two years old. I was sick and the children were sick, and I guess he thought things were too hard. Anyway he just cleared out, and ever since I've had it all to do."

"And aren't you glad that you're able to?" ex-

claimed Pollyanna. "So many women couldn't possibly take care of themselves and two children besides, no matter how much they wanted to."

Again the somber shadow on the young woman's face lifted slightly. "Why, yes, ma'am," she said. "I guess you're right as to that. I haven't much to be glad about, but I'd be worse off if I hadn't my health and couldn't take care of my children."

The two boys had been discussing some subject with absorbed interest, but now the voice of the older again rose shrill and penetrating. "No, I don't, I choose the sled."

"I choose the bear," shouted Joey.

"You'd be scart of the bear if you got it."

"Wouldn't, either. That kind o' bears can't eat you up."

"Sh!" cautioned the mother. "Don't talk so loud." But her lips curved in a smile that made her face very pleasant, and was still in evidence when Pollyanna said, "Good-evening."

Jimmy waited till they were at a safe distance before putting the inquiry, "May I ask your friend's name?"

"I don't know any name but Lizzie," Pollyanna explained, "but she comes every week to clean for Judith."

"Oh," Jimmy chuckled, "I thought, from your

pleasure over meeting her, that she must be an old school friend."

"She seemed rather blue to-night," said Pollyanna thoughtfully. "And you can't wonder when she has those two boys, and can't do anything to make a Christmas for them, except letting them look into the shop windows. Oh!" She stopped short with the exclamation, and Jimmy regarded her quizzically.

"Forgotten something?"

"Jimmy, I've a wonderful idea. Let's have a Christmas tree and invite those boys. I've been crazy to have a Christmas tree, and this is such a splendid excuse."

"You're a selfish young woman," teased Jimmy. "Here you're pretending you want to give two small boys a good time, while it's yourself you're thinking about."

Pollyanna dimpled becomingly. "It did seem too absurd to spend money on a Christmas tree for two grown-up, married people, but I've wanted one all the time, and now I'm going to have one. You'd like it, wouldn't you?" she added, with sudden apprehension.

"Of course I'd like it. Only let's invite them the afternoon before, so we can have Christmas to ourselves."

"But I've asked Russell and Judith to dinner Christmas day. They're all alone, you know, and she makes such hard work of cooking dinner, and a Christmas dinner just for two seems such an extravagance, and I thought ——"

"I surrender," cried Jimmy, throwing up his hands. "Don't shoot."

"But you don't mind, do you, Jimmy?"

"Not if they don't get to scrapping. But I agree with Solomon that it's better to have a dinner of baked beans, with affection and politeness as a sauce, than a Christmas turkey, with guests that never agree."

"They're doing a great deal better — since the tomatoes," Pollyanna declared hopefully.

"Yes, they're doing better. I suppose," Jimmy added reflectively, "that if people have grown old enough to marry without exercising any self-control, it's slow work learning it. But I have hopes of both of them."

Pollyanna changed the subject. "Lizzie's coming to Judith's tomorrow to clean, and I'll invite her and the children for the twenty-fourth and, if it's all right, we'll get the tree."

Pollyanna had no difficulty in making arrangements with the mother of the two boys. It was true that Lizzie herself had agreed to help someone

who was to have a Christmas Eve party, and she would be busy from four o'clock to considerably after midnight, but she explained that this need not interfere with Pollyanna's plans. "I'll bring the boys around about half past three," she said, "and when you get done with 'em, just take 'em down to the street, and they'll find their way home, all right. Peter's a real little man; Joey hasn't got much sense, but he'll mind, so I don't worry when he's out with Peter."

Accordingly, Jimmy and Pollyanna invested a portion of their Christmas funds in a Christmas tree. It was a small tree, of course, for the tiny apartment could hardly have accommodated anything else, and moreover Pollyanna was considering the cost of trimming it, and, from that point of view, the smaller the better. Then they bought discreetly of the regulation Christmas-tree ornaments, and Pollyanna made long strings of popcorn, with a cranberry inserted at intervals, and did wonders with red tissue paper. For several evenings she devoted herself almost entirely to the Christmas tree, Jimmy rendering such assistance as he was competent to give. They had bought several inexpensive gifts for each boy, and Judith, too, had contributed two artistically wrapped packages, but it was on the Christmas tree that Pollyanna was chiefly depending

for the success of the occasion. "For it will be their first Christmas tree," she said to Jimmy, "and just think how they'll enjoy it!"

By three o'clock on the afternoon of the twenty-fourth, the living room of Pollyanna's apartment looked crowded, though the special guests of the occasion had not yet arrived. The little spruce tree stood in the middle of the room, brave in all its Christmas finery, and, beneath the lower boughs, carefully wrapped in tissue paper, and tied with red ribbon, were the packages containing the gifts. Judith and Russell had dropped in to witness the delight of the children, and Gladys Moore, who had come over to bring Pollyanna a sweater she had made herself, and which could not by any possibility have been worn by any person larger than a three-year-old child, had been so interested in Pollyanna's explanation of the Christmas tree, that she had remained to see the fun.

Pollyanna, too excited to sit quietly, circled the tree again and again, straightening an ornament that hung askew, or shortening a loop of tinsel. "They're a little late," she said at length, with a glance at the clock.

"Don't you worry about their not getting here," Russell comforted her. "Nothing could keep them away."

"Oh, I know that. But Lizzie goes to work at five o'clock, and I thought ——" Pollyanna checked herself abruptly. "What *is* that queer noise!"

Everybody listened. From somewhere, seemingly from the hall, rose a strange weird sound. It made Pollyanna think of what she had read regarding the banshee. A wail swelled up and died away, then rose again shrilly.

Pollyanna ran to the door and threw it wide. In the hall was a strange spectacle. A young woman, with a flushed face and compressed lips, gripped with either hand a small boy. The eyes of the two boys were closed, yet not so tightly but what the tears rolled down their cheeks, and, when they caught their breath sufficiently, they broke into the wailing which had first arrested Pollyanna's attention.

"Oh, Lizzie," Pollyanna gasped, shocked as she recognized her anticipated guests. "What is it? What ails the boys?"

Before answering, Lizzie gave each of the children a shake, and advanced into the apartment, dragging them with her, though the boys hung back in a way that rendered this feat extremely difficult.

"I hope you'll excuse their actions, ma'am," exclaimed Lizzie, somewhat breathlessly. "They've had two good whippings since two o'clock, and if

they don't behave theirselves, they'll get another Christmas morning that they'll remember."

"But what are they crying for?"

"Scared!" snapped Lizzie, in accents of exasperation. "I never saw a pair like 'em. Seems as if they never could get used to nobody but me. Will you stop it now?" she demanded of Joey, giving him a violent jerk.

"Oh, don't, Lizzie," Pollyanna implored. "They can't help being frightened, you know. And they'll get over it as soon as they get a little used to things."

"'Twas the same last summer," Lizzie exploded wrathfully. "They were to go to the country for two weeks, with one of them Fresh-Air crowds, and what did they do when I got 'em to that railway station, but set up such a bellering that I had to bring 'em home again. Will you stop it?" she demanded, this time of Peter, and with a shake which seemed to express a resentment treasured from the summer previous.

Pollyanna glanced at the clock. "Don't you need to hurry along, Lizzie?" she inquired tactfully. "The boys will be all right after a little."

But it did not prove easy for Lizzie to hurry along, as her offspring flung themselves upon her and clung to her with tenacity. But she at length

freed herself, and made her way into the hall, banging the door behind her. The boys, after a frenzied and futile effort to follow her, by projecting their bodies through the solid oak, apparently resigned themselves to the worst. They stood sobbing violently, and, though they allowed Pollyanna to take them by the hands, and lead them into the living room, it was evident that their submission was due to their sense of absolute hopelessness, now that their only friend had deserted them.

"Just look at this Christmas tree!" chirped Pollyanna in her liveliest tones. "And see that little Santa Claus standing under it."

The two boys stood facing the tree, but it was at once plain that its splendor made no impression on them, for the reason that their eyes were squeezed tightly shut, in an ecstasy of misery.

"Perhaps you'd like some candy to start with," cooed Pollyanna, still counterfeiting extreme lightheartedness. "Jimmy, bring the dish from the dining room."

Jimmy rushed to obey, but the candies, temptingly arrayed on a blue and white platter, made as little appeal as the Christmas tree, and for the same reason.

"Now I wonder which you'd rather have," deliberated Pollyanna artfully, "a pink and white

striped candy cane, or a lovely red candy elephant."

Apparently Peter and Joey did not have the least intention of helping to solve this interesting problem. They only sobbed on, and when Pollyanna put one of the candy canes into Peter's hand, hoping that this would appeal to his curiosity sufficiently to make him open his eyes, he opened his hand instead, and let the cane drop. It broke in fragments on the rug, and Gladys found it impossible to control her emotions longer.

"Well, if those kids aren't the limit! After you've fussed to fix 'em up a tree, all they can do is to howl as if they expected to be murdered."

"How would it do to try them with the presents?" suggested Judith in a low voice. "I got a little bear for Joey, because you said ——"

"Just the thing." Pollyanna plunged into the pile of gifts under the Christmas tree, and tore the wrappings from the Teddy-bear with desperate haste. But her coaxing could not prevail on Joey to open his eyes, and, when she gently rubbed the bear's furry head against his cheek, Joey fell over against his brother and clung to him in a paroxysm of terror. For a moment even Pollyanna was at a loss. She stood with the bear in her hand gazing despairingly at the children whose Christmas she had hoped to make happy.

Gladys was muttering her opinion of such ingratitude, when Pollyanna spoke, the desperate earnestness of her voice expressing her conviction that the possible solution which had occurred to her was the one hope of saving the day.

"Listen, boys! How would you like to have this Christmas tree in your own house?"

Of course there was no answer. That would have been altogether too much to expect. But Pollyanna thought she detected a partial check in the vehemence of their sobbing. She was convinced that they had heard, that they were listening.

She repeated her suggestion, this time elaborating on it. "Wouldn't you like to go home, boys? And we'll go along, and bring the tree and everything. And we'll put it up where you can see it every day and play with it as much as you like."

The crying had actually stopped. Peter opened his swollen eyes a crack, and peered at his brother. Joey did likewise. The tear-stained faces were still much too tragic for smiles, but it was clear that Pollyanna's suggestion had been favorably received.

"It's the only thing to do," Pollyanna said resolutely. "I'll get the boxes the ornaments came in, and we'll pack them up again. The presents can go in my market basket. Then you'll have to carry

the tree over your shoulder, Jimmy, just as you did the night we bought it."

They all fell to work. In a surprisingly short time the tree was dismantled, and its gay trappings packed and ready for transportation. The two boys stood looking on meanwhile, with much the air of captives expecting death by torture, who have found themselves unexpectedly reprieved.

Pollyanna had assumed that Jimmy and herself would attend to the removal of the Christmas tree, and the two boys, while the guests, left behind, amused themselves in any way that appealed to them. But she soon learned that the others wished to share in all the excitements of the afternoon. When at length they left the house, they made quite a procession. Pollyanna took charge of the two boys, who seemed to find her a trifle less terrifying than the other strangers, probably because she had been responsible for the suggestion that they be allowed to return home. Jimmy carried the Christmas tree, and Russell the basket of gifts. Judith had made herself responsible for the box of candy, and Gladys for the ornaments stripped from the tree, and packed in haste. Even on the day before Christmas, such a caravan attracted attention. People came to the windows to stare as they passed. Pedestrians offered comments more or less complimentary.

In the metropolis rich and poor are neighbors perforce, and a short walk from the irreproachable neighborhood where Jimmy and Pollyanna had set up their household gods, brought them to streets which seemed utterly alien to America, crowded streets, where the faces were almost entirely foreign, and snatches of varied and fantastic tongues recalled the tower of Babel. The faces of the two boys cleared as they found themselves on familiar ground, and, when they reached the swarming tenement house which, to them, stood for home, they clattered up the stairs almost joyously.

Lizzie's quarters were a single room, bedroom, living-room, kitchen and dining-room combined. But they found a space for the Christmas tree, and set it up in almost its pristine elegance, the reservation being due to the fact that, on her way up the steep stairs, Gladys had dropped the box of ornaments and broken several which had been Pollyanna's especial pride. But the tinsel and the strings of popcorn and the festoons of tissue paper were less fragile, and the Christmas tree, in it new environment, lost nothing of its impressiveness.

The boys, while immensely relieved to find themselves at home, and vastly interested in all that was going on, were still too conscious of the peril they had so narrowly escaped to think of smiling. But

when at length, after farewells not too elaborate, the party took its departure, Pollyanna looked back from the doorway, and caught her husband's arm. "See Jimmy," she whispered; "it's all right now."

The boys were squatting on the floor, close to the Christmas tree, and Peter had seized a candy cane and was sucking it rapturously; Joey was holding the Teddy-bear to his heart, baby fashion, and his solemn little face wore a solemn little smile. And Pollyanna's own face lost its tense expression, as she saw her good intentions realized at last. "They're going to have a wonderful time, now," she sighed. "Bless their hearts."

On ahead, Gladys sniffed disdainfully. "Well, I should hope so. I'd have made them stay till they had to stop crying. They couldn't have kept that up forever."

Pollyanna shook her head. "No, Gladys. If you're going to try to give people pleasure, the sensible thing is to make them happy in their way, and not in yours."

"Rather disappointing, though, to have it turn out this way," sympathized Judith.

"I don't feel so a bit," cried Pollyanna. They were outside by now, and all were surprised by the brightness of her face. "I've always felt so sorry for the people who live in such poor homes. And

yet — don't you see — if it's home, they don't mind it's being shabby or crowded. Instead of feeling disappointed, I'm so glad to know that children who have to do without so many things feel as if home was the best place in the world, just as we do."

"It's a good thing to put a bold face on it," teased Jimmy. "You wanted an excuse for a Christmas tree, and now you've got the excuse, but no tree."

And when, a few blocks further on, they came to a side-walk vender, disposing of the last of his stock at bargain prices, Jimmy insisted, in spite of Pollyanna's protests, on buying a little tree. Of course there was nothing with which to trim it, for Pollyanna put her foot down firmly against further extravagance. But before Christmas was over, she had owned to Jimmy more than once that the little evergreen, breathing out its resinous, spicy fragrance, had been indispensable in giving to the day the atmosphere of Christmas.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DILEMMA

On Saturday, as a rule, Jimmy got off at one o'clock, or shortly after, ate a hasty luncheon and started for home, where he invariably found Pollyanna dressed and ready for an excursion of some sort. On these Saturday afternoons it never occurred to them to envy the rich, though probably nowhere in the world is wealth more ostentatious than in the great city where they were gradually beginning to feel at home. They always had a wonderful time on these half holidays, and came back tired and enthusiastic and so hungry that it seemed impossible to wait for a regular dinner. Accordingly Pollyanna had fallen into the way of having something for Saturday night that she could prepare in fifteen minutes or less.

On this particular Saturday afternoon, nothing especial had been planned, and Jimmy, as he had examined the contents of his pocketbook, congratulated himself that this was the case. Monday was pay day and in the meantime he had twenty-seven

cents for incidental expenses. But this realization, which might have seemed disturbing to one of an apprehensive temperament, impressed Jimmy as rather amusing. His lack of funds would not interfere with their Saturday afternoon frolic, since both Pollyanna and himself possessed a pair of perfectly good feet, and there were plenty of ways they could amuse themselves without spending a penny.

Under the circumstances, Jimmy decided that, instead of patronizing a lunch counter for his midday meal, he would go home and ask Pollyanna for a cold bite. He took the subway, was hurtled the usual number of miles along a subterranean passage, damp, clamorous and draughty, and finally sought the upper air with as blithe a heart as could be expected from a young family man, who found himself practically penniless.

His spirits clouded slightly over the discovery that Pollyanna was not at home. At first he was inclined to believe that she was trying to tease him and had concealed herself somewhere about the establishment, but after his exhaustive search, occupying nearly two minutes, had proved this hypothesis untenable, he concluded that she must be at Judith's, and rang the bell of the adjoining apartment several times without results. Then the pangs of hunger prompted him to forage for himself.

The result of his investigation was eminently satisfactory. In Pollyanna's ice box he almost immediately discovered a plate of sliced chicken. Jimmy was inclined to take for granted whatever he found in Pollyanna's ice box, and that was unfortunate. If he had stopped to think, he would have realized that they had not had fowl on the table since Christmas day, and that the neat slices of chicken could not possibly be scraps remaining from that festal meal. But Jimmy's logical faculty was temporarily quiescent, and appetite in control.

He made himself a sandwich, using generous slices of the white meat, and when he had disposed of that was ready for a second, even larger. Then he poured himself a glass of milk from a convenient bottle, and smacked his lips over it. People might talk of country milk, but he would like to see any dairy that could beat that.

He was just cleaning up, so as to obliterate all traces of his impromptu repast, when Pollyanna came. He heard her eager call — his hat and coat in the hall bore witness to his presence — and knew at once that something was in the wind. He hurried to learn what had happened and, as he kissed her, had a sense of well-being, to which his late satisfying meal and her radiant look contributed about equally.

"Jimmy, who do you think is coming here for dinner?"

"Matilda Fisher."

Pollyanna giggled delightedly over the witticism. "Now, Jimmy, be serious."

"Not Uncle John?"

"No, but you're getting warmer."

"Aunt Polly?"

"Jimmy, you're so slow that I'll have to tell you. It's Jamie and Sadie."

"Not really!" Jimmy was as delighted as Pollyanna herself. Somewhere in the back of his head was the recollection that once he had been acutely jealous of the crippled youth whom Pollyanna had so much admired, but the memory was vague, as if it had concerned some folly of his childhood.

"That's fine," he said with unfeigned enthusiasm. "Except for Uncle John, I don't know anybody I'd rather see. Are they going to be here long?"

"I really don't know. Sadie called me up to ask if we'd come down to the hotel and take dinner with them to-morrow, and I said we would, of course, only they must come up and take dinner with us to-night. But Sadie said they were to have a late luncheon with someone from the publishing

house, and please not to have too much, so I decided to make it a supper instead of a dinner."

"I see," said Jimmy, and, suddenly, for no reason whatever, he felt extremely uncomfortable.

"Now listen carefully," continued Pollyanna, quite unaware of his changed mood, "and see what you think of what I've planned. They're used to nice things, and so I'm very particular. I thought I'd start with tomato soup in the bouillion cups, with a little dab of whipped cream on top of each one. And then," she went on, checking off the items on her fingers. "I thought I'd have fried oysters and chicken salad and hot biscuits, and for dessert, a little pudding with whipped cream, and coffee. Does that sound good to you?"

"Fine," replied Jimmy in a hollow voice. "You said — chicken salad?"

"Yes. Of course I didn't have time to cook a chicken so I bought some already cooked at the delicatessan. I'd rather buy it sliced and make the salad myself. Then I know it's really chicken and not veal."

She glanced in Jimmy's direction and was immediately checked in her gay chatter. For Jimmy's expression of misery was unmistakable. She took a backward step and cried in alarm, "Why, Jimmy!"

"I'm afraid, dear," Jimmy exclaimed, haltingly,

"that maybe I — maybe I've upset your plans a little. That chicken in the ice-box ——"

Pollyanna gazed at him incredulously. "Why — it's for the salad. You didn't touch that, did you?"

"I'm afraid I did. You see I hadn't had any luncheon and I thought it was something left ——"

"Why, you couldn't have thought that, Jimmy. When have we had chicken?"

The inquiry was pertinent, but he felt a little annoyed that she should make it. "I suppose it was stupid of me," he acknowledged, "but I didn't think."

Pollyanna had hurried to the ice box. She looked inside, saw the plate of chicken cleared except for a few scraps, and made another discovery. "Why, Jimmy, what has happened to my cream?"

"Cream!" Jimmy repeated thickly. "Was that — cream?"

Pollyanna turned a tragic face upon him. "It wasn't ordinary cream. It was whipping cream." She saw by his expression that he did not understand her, and gave the necessary explanation, "Very rich, very *expensive* cream that will *whip*."

"Golly!" muttered the abashed Jimmy, "I thought it was extra good."

At this juncture it was quite evident that Pollyanna struggled with the impulse to make a cutting

rejoinder, and mastered it. When she spoke, nothing but the slight pensiveness of her voice revealed that she had been on the point of being disagreeable.

"I'm awfully sorry, Jimmy," she said. "But I shall have to borrow some money from you. I was pretty low anyway, and as long as we were going out to dinner to-morrow and you get paid Monday I spent nearly every cent I had for supper. I guess I'll need about two dollars."

Jimmy's face twitched. There was a humorous side to the situation, but for the moment he was quite incapable of seeing it. He was conscious only of intense mortification. His wife needed money to provide for the guests she had invited, and he had in his pocket the twenty-two cents that remained after paying his fare in the subway. He was perfectly aware that Pollyanna had ground for annoyance, but he felt that, if she scolded, his taut nerves would rebel. It was one of the occasions where a lack of tact or kindness may precipitate disaster out of all proportion to the trivial beginning.

But Pollyanna was not lacking in tact, and certainly not in tenderness. Something in the expression of the face she loved best suddenly dispelled her feeling of vexation. "What is it, Jimmy?" she questioned anxiously. "Aren't you feeling well?"

Jimmy produced from his pocket two dimes and

two pennies and laid the offering on the table. "With all my worldly goods I thee endow," he quoted, and his smile was forced.

Pollyanna stared, and Jimmy grimly explained. "I came home to luncheon because I was nearly broke. Of course if I'd known about Jamie and Sadie, I could have gone around to the savings-bank and got enough to tide us over. But it's too late for that now, and I was hungry, and like an idiot I cleared out the ice box."

Pollyanna suddenly realized that Jimmy was pleading his cause as if she had been a judge, and he the prisoner at the bar. And with that realization came the knowledge that this was no way to face the situation. The problem was not hers, complicated by his blunder, but a partnership affair. Her impulse to irritability had passed, and she astonished Jimmy, and possibly herself, by bursting into a rather hysterical laugh.

"Did you ever hear of anything so ridiculous? What are we going to do?"

Jimmy caught his breath, then grinned uncertainly. "That's the deuce of it," he said, as he knit his brows. "You couldn't borrow a little from Judith, could you?"

"I could and I'd do it in a minute, but the fact

is — she owes me several dollars. And if I went to her, it would be too much like dunning her."

"Of course. That settles that. Any chance of getting any of the dealers around here to trust you?"

Pollyanna's ready color rose as she pondered the question. "I don't know," she acknowledged. "I've always paid cash, and I've not bought very much in any one place. I'd hate terribly to ask for credit and be refused."

"Yes, we'd better not risk it. Then there's only one thing left to do, as far as I can see, and that is to hock something."

"What do you mean, Jimmy?" Pollyanna looked distinctly alarmed.

"Hunt up one of the boys with the three balls, and see what he'll let me have on my watch."

"Pawn it!" Pollyanna's tone indicated the extreme of horror.

"It's the only way I can think of to get money in a hurry. There's nothing disreputable about it, you know."

"Perhaps not," Pollyanna said doubtfully. "But it sounds that way, doesn't it? And I couldn't bear to have you pawn that beautiful watch Uncle John gave you."

"I'll only have to be without it till I get my check.

It's no worse — not as bad — as having a new mainspring. Would you rather I took some of the spoons?"

"Our wedding presents?" shuddered Pollyanna, horrified by the mere suggestion. "Oh, no!"

The ringing of the door bell interrupted their deliberations. "It's the postman," Pollyanna said, her manner indicating a total lack of interest in her correspondence, and Jimmy went downstairs to the letter box. When he returned Pollyanna had brought out her collection of jewelry, a very modest assortment, and was looking it over appraisingly.

"Letter postmarked Beldingsville," remarked Jimmy, tossing it to her. "What's all this?"

"Jimmy, suppose you see what you can borrow on this?"

"Not on your life. I got you into this mess by my greediness ——"

"Greediness! You poor, starved boy!"

Jimmy disregarded the interruption. "And I'm going to get you out of it. My watch won't come to any harm before Monday night, and that's the logical thing to do." He slipped his arm about her waist. "Don't look so down-hearted, or I'll feel more guilty than ever."

Pollyanna roused herself and smiled with great determination, after which they kissed each other

good-bye, as if fortifying themselves for a long separation. As Jimmy closed the door behind him, Pollyanna recalled the letter that Jimmy had said was postmarked Beldingsville. Glancing at the address, she saw it was from Nancy. As a rule, a letter from Nancy would have been welcomed with enthusiasm, but this afternoon Pollyanna was decidedly upset. She did not feel like reading anybody's letter, so she carried it over to her writing desk, intending to pigeon-hole it till a more convenient season.

And then, all at once, Nancy's broad, good-humored face rose before her, and flooding back upon her came the memory of Nancy's tenderness and sympathy in those far-off days, when Aunt Polly had hidden her affection as if it had been something to be ashamed of. Pollyanna's eyes suddenly grew misty. She seized the letter and broke the seal.

A few moments later, Jimmy, swinging along rapidly in the direction of a pawn-shop he happened to remember, heard behind him the patter of feet. He did not turn his head, being quite unaware that the aforesaid patter was any concern of his, till someone seized his arm. Then Jimmy turned quickly, with a forbidding frown that turned to a look of amazement as Pollyanna, bare-headed, panting, and altogether radiant, fell against his shoulder.

She could not master sufficient breath to speak, but she held up her hand in which was clutched a worn five-dollar bill.

"Five dollars!" stammered Jimmy. "How did you unearth that?"

It was a minute before Pollyanna was able to gasp out the reply. "Nancy's letter — shirt waist — wasn't it lucky?"

"It's lucky all right, but I don't know what you mean by shirt waists."

Still puffing, Pollyanna managed to explain that Nancy had seen an advertisement of shirt waists in one of the city newspapers and sent it on to Pollyanna, along with money for the purchase of certain styles she had marked. "I must tell her — not to send money — loose like that again," panted Pollyanna. "But how lucky — she did it this time!"

Sadie and Jamie arrived in a taxi-cab about five o'clock. Sadie was blooming, but Jamie looked pale, and seemed nervous. "He's been working so hard on his new book," Sadie said proudly. "And, Pollyanna, it's going to be the best one yet."

"I don't know whether it is or not," the author declared a little irritably. "Sometimes I feel as if it were perfect rot."

Sadie protested indignantly, and Pollyanna joined her.

" I've not read your book, but I know you couldn't possibly write anything that wasn't perfectly splendid."

She was quite sincere in her praise and she loved Jamie dearly, but, as she contrasted him with Jimmy, she was almost afraid that an unbecoming complacency would be written on her face for all to see. The temperament that went with talent impressed her as extremely difficult. She was glad that Jimmy was different.

The supper table looked extremely attractive, the tomato soup was delicious, and Jimmy felt as proud of his wife as she was feeling of him. But when the fried oysters, hot biscuits and chicken salad were brought on Sadie looked at Jamie doubtfully.

" What do you think, dear? How much of this do you dare eat? "

" Oh, I don't believe it will hurt me."

" Suppose you eat the oysters and leave out the salad," suggested Sadie. " And I know Pollyanna won't mind giving you a slice of bread instead of these delicious biscuits."

" Oh, I don't believe they'll hurt him, Sadie," Pollyanna protested. " They're so much nicer than bread, and they're light as a feather."

But Sadie shook her head, and said she was sure Jamie had better not eat hot biscuit. " You see he

spends so much time at his desk," she explained, " he has to be more careful than a person who is exercising all the time."

" In other words," Jamie translated soberly, " a man who is tied to two sticks has to guard his digestion."

His manner did not suggest a successful young author, and it was necessary for them all to devote themselves to raising his spirits. Fortunately the dessert was one he could eat, though Sadie vetoed the coffee.

" Jamie is so intense that his morning cup stimulates him enough. If he drank that, he wouldn't sleep all night."

Sadie and Jamie left rather early, for Jamie was tired from his trip, and the interview with his publishers. Once alone, Pollyanna and Jimmy attacked the dishes which had been piled in the sink to await the departure of their guests. As he wiped the last saucer, and added it to the array upon the table, Jimmy suddenly turned and enveloped Pollyanna in a tremendous hug. " Forgiven me yet for drinking up your cream? "

" Oh, Jimmy," Pollyanna cried, her voice extremely earnest, for all its under-current of laughter, " I'm so glad you *could* do it, and never know the difference."

CHAPTER XIV

A STORY RE-TOLD

One sunshiny morning in the week following the visit of Sadie and Jamie, Gladys Moore walked in on Pollyanna in a very bad humor. She flung herself into the armchair, and heaved an ostentatious sigh, intended to call immediate attention to her low spirits. "If this isn't the bum world," she said with feeling.

Even in a cheerful mood, Gladys left much to be desired as a companion. She was crude and undisciplined, and, when she gave expression to those sophisticated opinions which were clearly the echoes of her mother's conversation, even Pollyanna found her objectionable. And Gladys, in good spirits, compared with Gladys, in a gloomy frame of mind, as a bright March day, even if blustery, compares with a day of sleet and storm.

Yet, with it all, Pollyanna was fond of Gladys, perhaps because Gladys was so unmistakably and sincerely fond of her, and, accordingly, she answered the girl's pettish outbreak with the

sympathetic inquiry, "Why, what's wrong, dear?"

"Everything's wrong."

Pollyanna laughed. "I know better than that to start with. Why, the day's beautiful."

Gladys glanced through the window and seemed rather surprised to discover, above the tangle of fire-escapes, a patch of brilliantly blue sky. "Oh, the day's all right," she acknowledged grudgingly.

"So are lots of other things. If you'd stop to count up, you'd find more right than wrong, wouldn't you?"

Gladys seemed inclined to doubt it. "Father's home and doing a lot of grouching ——"

Pollyanna did not wait for the sentence to be finished. "Your father home! Why, how glad you must be."

Gladys squirmed instead of replying. Then she said sulkily, "Father's all right, but he don't understand things, and so he fusses and finds fault. And then the boys! They're up to something the whole time."

"They're healthy boys and full of life. You ought to be glad they are. I'd be frightened about a child that wasn't mischievous."

Apparently Glady's recital of her woes had been arranged with a view to the climax. She recounted the culminating grievance with a volubility which

left her breathless. It appeared that, two nights previous, a woman, who at one time had been intimate with Mrs. Moore, had given a big dance, and Gladys' mother had not been invited! As Gladys told the story, Pollyanna recognized a reflection of the mother's resentment. Some particularly venomous phrases, she was sure, were quoted almost word for word from Mrs. Moore's explanation of the slight.

"You see they're jealous of her, the old cats! She looks so much younger, and she's so popular, they're afraid to have her at their dances. 'Course my mother don't mind. They bore her 'most to death, anyway. She could have gone to a perfectly grand party that night, if she hadn't known about this one, and saved the date for it."

Pollyanna forebore to express the sympathy Gladys had evidently expected. She only said, "I should think you'd be glad to have your mother at home with you for an evening."

Gladys changed her position slightly so as to get a better view of her hostess. "Say," she exclaimed, "do you always do that?"

"Always do what?"

"Always hunt for something to be glad about. Seems to me that, when I tell you about something

that's perfectly horrid and disgusting, you ask me if I'm not glad about something else."

With a little sense of panic Pollyanna decided that this was the psychological moment for taking Gladys into her confidence concerning the game. In her childhood she had told everybody about it as a matter of course, but the utter lack of self-consciousness that had made this possible vanishes with childhood. Pollyanna often recalled, with a feeling almost like dismay, the things she had dared say to older people, and the astonishing forbearance with which they had listened, not realizing that, even by the most jaundiced specimen of humanity, her sunny confidences could not possibly be interpreted as preaching.

But, now that Gladys had asked for information, it was only right that she should get it. No one was more in need of the glad game than Gladys. Accordingly Pollyanna answered her question by saying quietly, "When I was a very little girl, my father taught me to look for something to be glad about, whatever happened. We made a game of it."

"A game?" repeated Gladys, who was listening with frowning attention. "I don't see much of a game to that."

"It's the greatest game in the world," asserted Pollyanna, with unfeigned enthusiasm. "And this is how we started to play it. My father was a minis-

ter in a little mission church, 'way out west, and we used to have a missionary barrel sent us every Christmas. I'm not sure," she broke off, with a glance at Gladys' attentive face, "that you know what a missionary barrel is."

Gladys confessed to ignorance on that score though she added, "I thought everything missionary was for heathen."

"Not always. A great many churches send poor ministers a barrel or a box once or twice a year. They put in all sorts of things, not often new, you know, though most of them are fairly good, outgrown clothing and such things."

"Gee!" Gladys burst out, "I shouldn't like to have folks sending me their old clothes. That's treating ministers same as beggars."

Pollyanna smiled, but did not undertake to show Gladys her mistake.

"I used to get awfully excited when the missionary barrel came," she said. "I always hoped there'd be something wonderful in it. And one year, when I wanted a doll so much that it seemed as if I couldn't stand it without one, Father wrote a letter to the church that was going to send us the barrel. I think he'd heard me praying for a doll, and, as long as they'd asked what we especially needed, he put that in. But, when the barrel came, the only

thing in it intended for a child was a pair of little crutches."

Gladys fairly jumped. "Well, of all the dirty deals I ever heard of! Crutches!" Her eyes blazed, then softened as they fell on Pollyanna. "You poor little kid, you!"

"That's when we started the game," Pollyanna went on, smiling at Gladys' outburst. "Of course I wasn't glad of the crutches, but Father said I could be glad I didn't need them. And ever since, I've found, however hard things seem, there's always something to be glad about. The game was to find the something, you see, and the worse things were, the greater the fun of finding it."

Gladys pondered. "And that's all there is to it?"

"Yes."

"I don't see how a game like that can be a great deal of fun."

"But you never tried it. There isn't any other game in the world that you can get so much fun out of."

"But listen," exclaimed Gladys, leaning forward, the better to emphasize her remarks. "You're different from most folks. You'd get fun out of your own funeral."

Pollyanna laughed. "If I would, it's because I've played the game so long."

"Oh!" said Gladys, and did not speak again for a moment. "Do you mean," she demanded earnestly at length, "that playing that game would make me like you?"

"I think perhaps I had what they call a cheerful disposition. But dispositions need to be cultivated, just as gardens do. I've had a great many hard things in my life. My mother died when I was a tiny girl and I was only eleven when Father left me. And then I came east to live with the aunt who had never seen me, and knew very little about children. And later I met with a serious accident, and it was two years before I walked again, and much of the time I suffered a great deal. I can't believe that my natural cheerfulness would have carried me through if it hadn't been for the glad game. Without it I'm afraid I might have become one of those dreadful, complaining people, who make life a burden for everybody, and for themselves most of all."

Gladys took Pollyanna's hand and held it against her cheek.

"If I thought playing that old game was going to make me like you," she said, her effort to stifle her emotions giving her voice an angry sharpness, "I'd start it as quick as a wink. I don't see how I can be so awfully glad when the boys are so aggravating, and the cook gets uppish and fussy and

Father treats Mother mean, but that's not so bad as being hurt so you can't walk, and having all your folks die." She heaved a tumultuous sigh. " S'pose it wouldn't do any harm to try, and see if it would work with me same as it did with you."

Pollyanna had hardly time to commend this tentative resolution before Judith arrived, clearly in the depths of despondency. She nodded casually to Gladys, who was not one of her favorites, and proceeded to unburden herself.

" Well, Pollyanna, I've tried those cakes again, and they're worse than ever. I might as well stop trying to cook. I do wish Russell would be satisfied to give up keeping house, and go to boarding. I don't know why he won't, for he certainly makes enough fuss over what he has to eat, and there's no especial fun making a slave of yourself, when you know you can't please people."

" Listen to that now," giggled Gladys, who had given close attention to this lament. " I do believe you're worse than I am." She turned on Pollyanna. " Why don't you get her started on your game? "

Pollyanna blushed without replying, and Judith's air of vexation was gradually replaced by a languid curiosity.

" What does she mean by your game, Pollyanna? "

Gladys did not give Pollyanna time to answer. "You know she's different from us, don't you?"

"Different? Why, yes — I suppose so."

"She isn't fussing all the time, is she, and saying how hard she has things, and how she's worse off than anybody else? Well, that's because she began to play a game when she was a little girl."

Judith looked at Pollyanna as if expecting an emphatic denial. But Pollyanna only smiled and Gladys teased impatiently, "Tell her about it. Tell her about the crutches."

"Crutches?" Judith dropped into a chair. "What on earth is she talking about, Pollyanna? What have crutches to do with a game?"

And so, for the second time within a half hour, Pollyanna told the story of the childish disappointment, transformed by a sunny thought into a sort of prism which, ever since, had painted the hard experiences of life with the colors of the rainbow. Judith listened attentively, but evidently with a feeling that her troubles were a little different from those of other people, an attitude by no means unusual.

When Pollyanna had finished, she hesitated a moment, before she said, "That would work all right with some things, Pollyanna, but I can't just see ——"

Gladys could no longer contain herself. "For the

love of Mike!" she burst out, "you don't think, do you, that because you can't make cake, you're worse off than she was when her father and mother died and she was hurt so she couldn't walk for a long time, and I don't know what else beside?"

As a matter of fact, Judith had meant this very thing, but not liking to hear it so baldly stated, she replied with her most chilling air, "Of course not."

"I guess if she could play the glad game, as she calls it," continued Gladys, "we can do it, too. I'm worse off than you. If you had three brothers, and all of 'em ornery, you'd have something to worry about. Of course you've got a husband, but husbands have to be grown up, and they aren't in it, for meanness, alongside such a kid as Gregory. I s'pose," she added after a moment of reflection, "that I can be glad that I haven't got a husband — not till those boys are off my hands."

Even Judith had to laugh at Gladys' first attempt to play the game, but Gladys, intent on impressing her listeners with the extent of her difficulties as an older sister of three irrepressible boys, rattled on. "Now Norman used to be better than the others. He'd let you spank him without kicking so very much, but lately he's getting to be such a smarty. The other day he stole a lot of chocolates out of a box somebody sent Mother. I knew he did it, but

he wouldn't own up. And finally I told him I could find out easy who did it. I'd just ask God."

Judith laughed, and Pollyanna winced, privately resolving to improve the first opportunity to have a talk with Gladys regarding this method of discipline. But, quite unaware of her friend's inward recoil, Gladys continued, "Well, after an hour, he came 'round and looked at me in that queer way he has, and said he, 'Did you ask God about that yet?' I told him no, I hadn't had time, and then what do you think he got off? 'Well,' said he, 'you needn't bother yourself. I asked Him and he said He'd forgotten the kid's name.'"

It was quite impossible not to laugh, and Gladys waited till the outburst was over before inquiring plaintively, "Now what can you be glad about, if you've got a young one like that to look after?"

"You can be glad that he's not stupid," laughed Judith. "He must be a bright little fellow to think of anything like that."

"Oh, Norman's nobody's fool," Gladys admitted with a hint of complacency. "Nor the other boys either. They've got awful dispositions, but they're smart." She turned and stared resentfully at Pollyanna's clock, which had improved a momentary lull to lift up its silvery voice. "Don't tell me that clock's right."

"Two minutes fast. I compared it with Jimmy's watch this morning."

"Well, I'll have to be going. I don't dare to be away when those boys get home for luncheon. The last time I was over here for lunch, those kids pelted one another with bread and jelly and the cook said that, if it happened again, she'd put on her things and walk out. You wouldn't believe it, but there was jelly spattered clear to the ceiling, and it looks like we'd been killing mosquitoes up there. Seems as if I didn't more'n get to a place before I have to start right back again."

"As far as I can see," Judith remarked, a little maliciously, "you don't have a particularly easy time yourself, starting to play Pollyanna's game."

Gladys looked taken back for a moment, but rallied almost instantly. "Well, I guess it would take practise to play it awfully well. But I'm kinder glad I have to go, 'cause if I didn't, probably I'd stay so long that everybody'd get sick of my company."

But, even while she laughed, Gladys was in earnest, regarding the game. To this untaught girl, Pollyanna seemed the embodiment of everything admirable. Gladys' devotion to her mother was blind and unreasoning, but, where other people were concerned, she was more than ordinarily sharp-eyed and inclined to be critical. Something fine in the depths

of her recognized and revered the beauty of Pollyanna's nature, responding to it as a buried seed responds to the call of spring. And if playing the glad game was going to make her like Pollyanna, then she meant to play it for all it was worth.

And Judith, too, while she scraped into the garbage can the cakes which had proved such dismal failures, checked the impatient words upon her lips, as she recalled the little crutches in the missionary box. Like most fretful people, Judith saw her own vexations through magnifying glasses, while it was extremely easy for her to discover alleviations for other people's troubles. Almost for the first time, she realized that Pollyanna's sunny cheerfulness was not due to her having an easier time than other people, but because she had made a life-long habit of looking for the cheerful side of the most unpromising situations.

"Dear Pollyanna," said Judith, who an hour before had shed salt tears over her collapsed and hopeless cakes, and she hummed defiantly, as she scraped the sticky mess from the tins. "Anyway," she said to herself, "I'm glad we don't have to eat them."

CHAPTER XV

JIMMY HAS A BIRTHDAY

ONE sunshiny morning in January, the table in Pollyanna's dining-room looked as if she had planned for a feast of reason instead of an ordinary breakfast. All around Jimmy's plate were piles of books, books bound in half morocco and presenting such an attractive appearance that one felt illogically sure that there must be something very interesting inside.

Jimmy was singing loudly as he dressed. In the kitchen Pollyanna bustled about, with an air of desperate energy, doing something and then undoing it the next moment, her senses alert for Jimmy's next move. She was not thinking at all of breakfast, but of those imposing columns of books.

"Oh," she said to herself breathlessly, "I hope he likes them. I hope he does. I hope he wouldn't rather have had something else. Oh, dear!"

She seized the saucepan containing the breakfast bacon and put it into the refrigerator, instead of on the stove, where it belonged. It was fortunate that

she did not empty it into the garbage can, for she did not have the least idea what she was doing. The bathroom door had slammed shut, and a buoyant whistle announced that Jimmy was coming for his breakfast.

At the door of the dining-room he stopped short, the whistle also stopping. There was a moment's silence while Pollyanna stood tense, hardly venturing to breathe. Then came the explosion.

"Great Cæsar's ghost! What does this mean! Pollyanna!"

Pollyanna rushed to answer the summons. "Oh, Jimmy," she cried, hurling herself into his arms. "Do you like them? Would you rather have had something else?"

Jimmy's arms closed about her. "Of course I like them, but what have you been doing? Robbing a book store?"

Pollyanna disdained to answer the charge. "I don't believe you even know what they are. It's a set of Dickens. Jimmy, are you sure you wouldn't rather have some other author?"

"Cross my heart, I wouldn't. If Dickens had never done anything but write of those two friendless boys, Oliver Twist and David Copperfield, he'd head the list with me. You see I appreciate the picture better than most people can."

Pollyanna strangled a sob against his heart. "Oh, Jimmy, I'm sorry to bring that back to you today of all days."

"Don't worry about that, sweetheart. I have to look back at the poor little devil that was myself, to get the full flavor of my happiness now." Still holding her tightly, he steered the conversation to a less harrowing theme. "Of all extravagant minxes! They must have cost pretty near your month's allowance."

"It's not one bit extravagant," protested Pollyanna excitedly. "I didn't have to pay for them all at once, you see."

"Two dollars down and two dollars a month for the rest of your life, I suppose. So you think things don't cost much, if they're bought that way. Well, I hold to the opinion that you're an extravagant minx. Don't bother about any breakfast, Pollyanna. Instead of taking any fruit, I'll read how Oliver pitched into Noah Claypole, and instead of cereal, I'll have David's visit ——"

"Jimmy, stop talking nonsense. There's grape fruit for breakfast. Sit down and I'll bring it in."

The meal was all that a birthday breakfast ought to be, an extremely gay and joyous occasion. Jimmy complained that the columns of books shut off his view of his wife, and so they were re-arranged,

making a sort of colonnade along which they could look at each other to their hearts' content. A temporary excitement was occasioned by the mysterious disappearance of the sauce-pan containing the breakfast bacon. They both got up from the table to hunt for it, Pollyanna declaring that its weird vanishing was enough to make one believe in witches. When after an exhaustive search, they found the saucepan in the refrigerator, Pollyanna was quite indignant to have Jimmy insinuate that she put it there herself. Only after a protracted argument did she admit that she had been so excited that she did not really know what she was doing. And so with love and laughter, Jimmy's birthday began.

Pollyanna meant to make that birthday a real red-letter day, for Jimmy's childhood was to her a distressing memory. In her mind was a vivid picture of Jimmy as she had seen him first, a forlorn little outcast, sitting by the roadside, a freckled, rather dirty small boy, who even then showed the manly qualities which went to the making of the Jimmy she adored. He had wanted to work for his board and keep. She could see quite plainly the little arm held out that she might admire its muscular development, and her eyes brimmed over at the remembrance.

Of course Jimmy had been fortunate. Thanks to

her intercession, he had found a home under John Pendleton's roof. He had been given the advantages of schools and travel. He had won his guardian's affection. But there was one thing Jimmy had wanted that he had never had, and that was a home with a mother in it. Pollyanna felt that it was her business to make up for that early lack. She must be wife and mother both.

As far as she knew, Jimmy had never had a birthday party, and she had resolved to make this first birthday of their married life memorable, by introducing him to this time-honored festivity. Of course it was to be a complete surprise. She had planned everything with the utmost care, so that he should not have the least ground for suspicion. They had made so few friends in the great city that it was an easy matter to select the little company to be asked to grace the occasion. Russell and Judith were included as a matter of course. A classmate of Jimmy's had called with his wife several times, and they gladly accepted her invitation, and a young couple they had met at church, made up as large a dinner party as Pollyanna's dining-room would accommodate, while it was necessary to borrow chairs from both bedrooms in order to seat everyone.

Jimmy had hardly left the house before Pollyanna

plunged into the work of preparation. Judith, who came over to help her, after a little, was astonished by her radiant air.

"I don't see how you can be so cheerful, Pollyanna, when you've got such a lot to do."

"Cheerful!" Pollyanna repeated, and laughed joyously. "Why I don't have to be. I'm having the time of my life."

"I can't see any fun in slaving from morning till night."

"I dare say that wouldn't be fun. But I couldn't slave for Jimmy. However hard I worked, it couldn't possibly be that."

Judith watched her as she went from task to task, her steps light, and her face aglow. And, as she watched, she realized more and more that drudgery is not dependent on the amount of work to be done, nor on the nature of the work done, but is altogether concerned with the spirit. Pollyanna might overwork, she might exhaust herself, struggling with burdens too great for her strength, but never under any circumstances could she become a drudge.

Judith stood gallantly by the ship in spite of Pollyanna's protest that she must not get so tired that she would not enjoy the evening. At one o'clock the two friends ate a hurried luncheon, and then Judith set the table for dinner, an accomplishment on which

she justly prided herself. This completed, Pollyanna issued an edict of banishment till the hour of six-thirty.

"You've been a perfect angel and helped me wonderfully, but, if you stay another minute, you'll be terribly in the way."

Judith went home laughing and surprised to find that though she had really done a hard day's work, she did not feel tired.

"I suppose it's more interesting when two work together," she said to herself. "Or — well, I suppose Pollyanna's way of looking at things does make a difference." And then through her mind floated a couplet she had learned in her school days, without realizing its profound philosophy.

"Your merry heart goes all the day
Your sad tires in a mila-a."

Jimmy got home three quarters of an hour ahead of his usual time. At the sound of his key in the latch, Pollyanna came flying out to welcome him. She wore a long-sleeved apron which enveloped her from head to foot and concealed the fact that she was wearing her best gown.

"Jimmy," Pollyanna gasped, and something in her manner suggested consternation rather than delight, "how do you come to be so early?"

"Isn't a man allowed to celebrate his own birthday?" Jimmy demanded.

"Yes, of course, but — well, you'll have to stay right in the living room, dear, and not notice if you smell anything particularly good. Dinner is — is a surprise."

The windows of the living room were up, for, as the day happened to be especially mild, the janitor, like all janitors, had got up an enormous pressure of steam, and without relief from the outside the little apartment would have been suffocating. And, as Pollyanna talked, the dining-room door opened noiselessly, behind her back, and then, yielding to the capricious breeze, closed again with a click.

The second that it had stood ajar had been enough for Jimmy to see that the little round table had grown since morning, and that the array of knives and forks and tumblers and various other utensils was very much more than could possibly be needed by a family of two. Jimmy, who had seemed on the point of saying something, closed his lips tightly, apparently afraid that if he were not very careful, some unadvised remark would escape them. But when he spoke it was to say meekly, "Have you any objection, ma'am, to my reading 'Dombey and Son?'"

Pollyanna smoothed his hair maternally. "You

must make yourself look nice before you do any reading. At a birthday dinner you must have everything clean and shine your shoes."

For form's sake, Jimmy thought it best to protest. "I'll submit to a clean collar," he said. "But the shoes impress me as a supererogation. My feet will be under the table, anyway."

Pollyanna was firm. "Even if I can't see them, I shall want to know they're shining."

Jimmy went to do her bidding, pretending to grumble, and Pollyanna hurried back to the supervision of dinner. When the bell rang at twenty-five minutes past six, it was Jimmy who answered the summons. It had been arranged that Pollyanna's guests should meet at Judith's apartment and present themselves in a body. And Jimmy's astonishment as he encountered the half-dozen friends was really a histrionic triumph. Pollyanna, rushing out to greet them all, was delighted by her husband's air of bewilderment.

"He nearly spoiled everything by coming home early," she told them, as she slipped her arm through Jimmy's, and gave it a playful shake. "I was perfectly horrified when I heard him come in. I had to tell him I had a surprise for dinner, and that he mustn't open the dining-room door."

"Even if he had, he probably wouldn't have

noticed anything," laughed Mrs. Bacon, a pretty little blonde and the wife of Jimmy's classmate. "Men are so unobserving. I can make Bob's Christmas present right under his nose, and he never suspects a thing."

"Listen to that, Bacon," Jimmy exclaimed. "Sounds to me as if they were reflecting on our intelligence. Are you going to stand for that?"

"My theory is," young Bacon replied, serenely, "that the only way to be comfortable is not to see too much. If that be stupidity, make the most of it, as Patrick Henry would say."

Pollyanna was not one of the young housewives whose newly acquired skill is likely to collapse under the strain of an especial occasion. She had learned her lessons too well to forget them in an emergency. Her dinner was delicious. Everybody was hungry. And around that little table there was enough fun and laughter to supply the average hotel banquet, with scores of tables and hundreds of guests, and then have a surplus left over. Though they drank Jimmy's health only in grape juice, their wits were not of the sort that are prosy without alcoholic stimulation. It was nearly midnight when the party broke up, and then they went reluctantly.

"Haven't had such a good time since I came to

New York to live," little Mrs. Bacon declared, and the others echoed her.

But Pollyanna was especially interested to hear what Jimmy had to say. Hospitable as she was, she could hardly wait to get rid of them all. Almost as the door closed upon them, she turned on Jimmy, "Well, how did you like your birthday party?"

"Loved it."

"Wasn't it the first you ever had?"

"The very first. And, if it's the last, it makes up for all the hard things that have ever happened to me."

"Jimmy!" Pollyanna protested, the tears starting unexpectedly to her eyes. "What makes you say such a thing? How could it be the last?"

"You may not think I deserve birthday parties, after you get better acquainted with me."

Pollyanna laughed with recovered cheerfulness at the absurdity of that suggestion, and said that she had made up her mind he was to have a party every birthday in his life, for ever and ever. "But of course the others can't be surprise parties," she said, "because now I've told you." Then it occurred to her to wonder if she had put the remainder of the whipped cream on the ice, and she hurried off to see.

As she left the room, Jimmy drew from his pocket

two green cardboard slips, covered with fine printing. He looked at them and sighed heavily.

"Orchestra seats, fifth row," said Jimmy to himself, "and the show we've wanted to see so long, and thought we couldn't afford it. Surprises are jolly, but it's tough when they're twins."

CHAPTER XVI

GLADYS STICKS TO THE GAME

If Pollyanna's sense of humor had been more than a match for her sympathy, she would have derived considerable amusement from observing the efforts of Gladys Moore to play the glad game. But there was something so pathetic in the struggle of this untaught girl to measure up to the standard she had set for herself, that, when Pollyanna felt most like smiling, she felt most like weeping, too.

Over the telephone, Gladys informed her of the departure of the latest cook, incensed by some prank of Gregory's, just an hour before dinner, and of Gladys' own attempts to prepare the meal. That she had not been particularly successful was only too evident. She had done just as the cook-book had said, but things turned out "funny." There were hard places in the potatoes, a most unreasonable procedure on their part, for Gladys was positive she had boiled them long enough. The cauliflower, on the other hand, was cooked so thoroughly that Mr. Moore had mistaken it for soup. The roast seemed

to have dried up and was a sickly greyish color instead of the conventional brown. In an ambitious mood, Gladys had attempted a dessert in the shape of a steamed pudding, but, when it came to serving it, her courage had failed her.

"But anyway I found something to be glad about," shouted Gladys, as if trying to reach Pollyanna's ear over the intervening miles of space, by sheer lung power. "I'm glad I told her just what I thought of her. 'Well, Susie,' I said, 'if this isn't a nasty trick I never heard of one, and it's exactly what I'd have expected of anybody as low-down and ornery as you are.' She was so mad she almost burst."

Mr. Moore's presence in his own house continued to be regarded as an affliction. "Dad's so unreasonable," Gladys once complained. "Now you wouldn't think anybody would ask a person like my mother to go to live in some little jerk-water burg, would you? Why, society is just the same to her that meat and potatoes are to other folks. She just lives on it. But Dad can't seem to understand, and he's always making the craziest kind of plans, and, when she laughs at him, he gets sore."

Then, reading in Pollyanna's face a disapproval, which she interpreted as due to her failure to observe the rules of the game, Gladys added hastily, "But

sometimes I'm glad he's around. Now the other day I sent Gregory to buy some corned beef at the delicatessen and he spent the change for peanut brittle and, when he got home, he pretended that the corned beef cost a whole dollar, and his breath smelling of peanuts, so a fool would know just what had happened. Dad came out when I was scolding him, and took him into the bathroom and gave him a good licking. Yes, sir! I'm glad that smarty got what was coming to him for once."

Up to this time, Gladys had returned her own calls. Pollyanna disliked Mrs. Moore so cordially that she felt uncomfortable under her roof, even though the chances of meeting Mrs. Moore herself were so slight as to be negligible. But her anxiety to do everything possible to encourage the girl who had so little to help her, led Pollyanna to overcome her feelings of distaste, and make Gladys brief visits on several occasions. And on one of them she met Mr. Moore.

Gladys' father was apparently a number of years older than his wife. He was a tall, ungainly man, prematurely bald, and would have impressed Pollyanna as altogether commonplace, had it not been for his tragic eyes. Never had she seen such disillusion as looked out from Mr. Moore's small, pale eyes. When he admitted her to the apartment, he

had seemed to regard her with the suspicions which she guessed had become habitual with him, and then he had looked at her again, and apparently had changed his mind. As she sat in the living room, waiting for Gladys to finish her belated toilet — it was then past four o'clock — Mr. Moore unexpectedly offered his company to beguile the time of waiting.

"Sorry to have you kept like this, Miss — don't quite recall your name."

"I'm Mrs. Pendleton," Pollyanna replied, with her winsome smile. "I'm very fond of your little girl."

Mr. Moore dropped into a chair, extending his long legs in front of him, and allowing his arms to dangle at his side. His appearance suggested a mechanical toy, seriously out of order.

"Yes, Gladys is a smart kid, all right," he said. "But all of 'em are smart enough, for that matter. What they need is somebody to train 'em and look out for 'em and make 'em behave. Why, they're running wild, the whole lot."

Pollyanna agreed with him too entirely to make it safe to venture any comment. But her eyes were sympathetic, and, expanding in the warmth of her gentle interest, Mr. Moore continued.

"Most folks would call me a lucky man, I guess.

I've made quite a lot of money. 'Course it don't mean anything here. You've got to be two or three times a millionaire to count at all. But back where I came from ——"

He stopped with an explosive sigh that suggested an engine letting off steam, and again fixed his sad eyes upon her.

"If we went back to the little town in Ohio where I grew up, I wouldn't have to do another lick of work unless I wanted to, and I could build the nicest house in town, the kind with a big piazza, you know, and lots of room, and maybe a cupola. And I'd have a garden and keep chickens, and have a couple of cars, one of 'em a big touring car, to take the whole family off on picnics. That's what I call living. But as for sticking around in this burg, with my wife playing the society game and the boys going to the devil — well, I don't know that life pays on those terms."

Under the circumstances the effort to comfort Mr. Moore was very much like making bricks without straw. In desperation Pollyanna fell back on Gladys as the most inspiring topic available. She spoke of her precocious womanliness, and how it had attracted her when she saw Gladys for the first time. Mr. Moore listened mournfully, punctuating her remarks with short nods of approval.

"Yes, she's a woman all right," he said. "Has to be. Somebody's got to be a mother to the boys. And, if my wife isn't at the theatre, she's at a bridge or a dinner or a dance. Gladys ought to be in school. What's the good of being a successful man, if your daughter grows up ignorant and your sons ——"

He broke off as Gladys bounced into the room. She flung herself upon Pollyanna and kissed her as if it had been years since she had seen her last, instead of exactly three days.

"Oh, how perfectly darling of you to come to see me!" twittered Gladys. "But why didn't you tell me, so I could have been dressed and not wasted a minute." There were plenty of chairs about, but Gladys seated herself precariously on the arm of the rocker Pollyanna occupied, evidently feeling that her closer proximity to the object of her adoration more than compensated for a trifling insecurity. Pollyanna felt Mr. Moore's somber eyes resting upon them wonderingly, and she guessed he would have given much for a little of the affection lavished upon an outsider. As he rose and shuffled disconsolately from the room, apparently certain that his daughter would find him in the way, Pollyanna's eyes misted over.

"What's the matter with you?" challenged Gladys, stooping in order to inspect her caller more

closely. "I don't believe you're playing the game yourself this afternoon. You look sorry about something."

Pollyanna forced herself to smile. "Indeed I am playing the game," she said. "I'm so glad I met your father, dear, and I'm glad to find him so nice. You should be a great comfort to your father, Gladys."

"Comfort!" exclaimed Gladys staring. "Why, there's nothing the matter with Dad. You see Dad isn't like Mother. All he cares about is to have a pipe and a newspaper, and sit around and not have the boys bother him getting into a fight. He doesn't need anybody to comfort him. All he wants is to be let alone."

The slamming of the outer door of the apartment indicated that Mr. Moore had taken his departure, and Gladys gave her visitor a superior smile, evidently signifying, "You see I was right." And so hard upon the sound of the closing door, as to seem an echo, came a crash from one of the rear rooms, followed by a roar.

"Now don't get excited," expostulated Gladys, as Pollyanna started up in alarm. "That's nothing. Probably they are playing pirate or bandit or something of that sort, and one of 'em knocked the other down."

"But it sounds as if he were really crying."

"Maybe he is. They bat each other around till the wonder is they don't break their bones."

Norman came running in. "Malcolm fell out of his airship," he announced, with the importance characteristic of the bearer of ill tidings.

"Airship! My goodness! What did he have for an airship?"

"He got up on the high part of the bed, and he had the coffee grinder to make a noise like an engine, but he fell out and hurt his knee."

The advent of Malcolm himself roaring lustily corroborated this information. Malcolm's stocking was pulled down, showing a battered and blood-stained knee. Pollyanna uttered an exclamation of sympathy, but Gladys, slipping her hand into the dangling stocking, examined it anxiously, and apparently with satisfactory results.

"Listen, Malcolm," she cried, in accents offensively cheerful, "you haven't hurt your stocking a mite. Aren't you glad?"

Malcolm, who clearly had expected commiseration, howled again, this time with rage rather than pain. "No I'm not," he screamed. "I wish I'd made a great hole in my stocking. I wish I'd torn it so I wouldn't never wear it again."

Gladys stroked his hair the wrong way, though

evidently with the intention of soothing him. "Well, anyway, I guess you're glad you didn't break your leg," she said. And to Pollyanna in a significant aside, "I'm trying to teach the boys to play the game, too."

Pollyanna felt this was an inopportune time for initiating Malcolm into the mysteries of the glad game, and suggested that they attend to the knee without delay. They bathed and bandaged it in a business-like manner and their attention was evidently balm to Malcolm's lacerated feelings.

"Lots of things have been the matter with me," he said, when Pollyanna complimented him on his courage. "Measles and whooping cough, and — and two teeth out and — this, and — I suppose the next thing will be the bubonic plague."

By the time Malcolm was properly attended to, Pollyanna announced that she must go, and she tore herself away with some difficulty, for Gladys, who had been brought up to think punctuality of no importance whatever, was ready to use force to delay her departure. What difference did it make if dinner wasn't at the usual time? "It won't hurt your husband to wait," declared Gladys, holding fast to Pollyanna's arm. "And he sees so much more of you than I do."

But Pollyanna was firm, and Gladys at last gave

up coaxing as a bad job, and promised to return the visit very soon. "Now Dad's here to look after the kids, I'm going to come over and stay all day."

"Do, dear," Pollyanna said. She thought if they had a day together, she could manage, without openly correcting Gladys' misapprehension, to enlighten her somewhat regarding the nature of the game. "Come soon," she urged, and Gladys answered buoyantly, "Sure I will."

But that promise was not to be kept. Two days later, shortly after breakfast, Pollyanna's telephone rang. She answered with her usual cheery, "Hello," and a voice she did not recognize, spoke her name. "This Mrs. Pendleton?"

"Yes."

"You're the one, ain't you, who's the friend of a little girl named Gladys Moore?"

Pollyanna started. "Why, yes. Is this Mr. Moore?"

"Yes, I'm her father." He stopped as if he did not find it easy to continue, then said with a gulp, "There's been an accident."

"An accident! Oh, Mr. Moore!"

"She's at the Randall hospital, she and her mother, too, but Gladys is hurt the worst, and she wants to see you."

"Of course I'll come, Mr. Moore."

"Better make it soon. She — she's hurt pretty bad."

"I'll be ready to start," said Pollyanna, "in about ten minutes." And she heard over the wire his unconscious, heart-breaking sigh.

It was hard to believe it was really Gladys, that white, bandaged little shape in the hospital bed. She looked small, like a child, but the changed face looked strangely old. Pollyanna's entrance into the room made no difference to Gladys. The heavy lids did not lift. The white lips did not twist themselves into the semblance of a smile.

"She'll rouse up and say something for a minute," mumbled Mr. Moore in Pollyanna's ear, "and then she sinks back into a kind of stupor. I hope you don't mind waiting. I'd like to have her find you here when she wakes up again."

Pollyanna did not mind waiting. "How did it happen?" she asked, in a low voice, as she sat beside the stricken man.

His grey face twitched. "That's the worst of it. She was called out last night to bring her mother home."

Pollyanna's moving lips repeated the words over after him, but without speaking them aloud.

"I'd gone to bed, and I didn't hear the telephone. I'm not welcome in my wife's crowd and, if I sit up

for her, there's likely to be words. Quarreling don't help, that I can see, so I'd gone to bed. They wanted Gladys to come to a restaurant where they'd been eating and dancing — and drinking — after a show. It wasn't the first time they'd sent for Gladys, it seems. She could do 'most anything with her mother when she was — that way."

Pollyanna threw out her hand with an appealing gesture. She did not want to hear more. But Mr. Moore, unheeding, droned on.

" She wasn't drunk, exactly. But she'd had a good deal to drink. And she was noisy and silly and she wouldn't go home. So they sent for Gladys. I didn't hear the telephone, of course, and I didn't hear her go out. But they say it was a little after one o'clock."

He shifted his position slightly, keeping his eyes fixed on the motionless figure on the bed.

" There was five of 'em in the car when they started back. Gladys had coaxed her mother into coming along quiet. The men had all been drinking, of course. The fellow at the wheel same as the rest. So they had a collision with a taxi-cab, and all of 'em were hurt more or less. My wife's in a room across the hall. Her face is cut up bad with the broken glass, but it's Gladys that's the worst."

He finished his story and sat silent, his long legs stretched out uncomfortably, so that he looked alto-

gether too large for the little chair, his fingers twitching nervously. Pollyanna sat beside him without speaking, her heart so swollen with misery that she was conscious of a keen physical pain.

The nurse came and went with her air of professional cheerfulness. Once from across the hall came the sound of hysterical crying, and Pollyanna thought she recognized Mrs. Moore's voice, but the man beside her listened without the flicker of an eyelash. Pollyanna wondered if he really heard.

It was while both the doctor and nurse were in the room that a tremor stirred the figure in the bed. Then the closed eyes opened, and a bandaged hand moved. The father turned his agonized eyes on Pollyanna. "Go over so she can see you're here," he implored. "She's always talking about you, and, when she came to before, the first thing she said was your name."

Pollyanna went over by the bed. She was trembling violently, but she bravely tried to smile. The great eyes looked at her for a moment with a blank stare that chilled her. Then recognition suffused them like a light, and Gladys' lips moved. Pollyanna thought she made out the words, "I'm glad."

She bent over her tenderly. "Don't try to talk now, darling. I'll come every day and when you're better we'll have ever so many good talks together."

But Gladys knew better. Rallying her strength for a supreme effort she spoke quite distinctly. "I'm glad — it wasn't Mother."

Pollyanna, choking down her sobs, tried to answer, but, to her surprise, the nurse put an arm about her and drew her away. Then she saw that Mr. Moore had risen to his feet, and stood gazing at the bed, the tears rolling down his cheeks. And, looking at his face, she understood.

And so Gladys Moore, untaught and undisciplined, yet of that loyal stuff of which saints and heroes are made, played the game to the end.

CHAPTER XVII

SAUCE FOR THE GOOSE

For some weeks after Gladys' death, Pollyanna struggled against an unaccustomed sense of depression. The possibilities latent in the undisciplined girl had been apparent to her almost from the first. There was in Gladys the raw material of a splendid womanhood, and Pollyanna had believed that the girl would realize that finer self, in spite of innumerable obstacles in her way, and in spite of the fact that she had no help whatever from the one who should have been her chief reliance. Now, as she went about her work, Pollyanna found herself constantly grieving over the tragic waste of that young life. Again and again, through the day, the tears started to her eyes as she recalled one or another of Gladys' characteristic speeches, and, while she did her best to hide her depression from Jimmy, her very efforts made her a shade less responsive than usual, and decidedly less observant.

It was the afternoon of a very rainy and disagreeable Sunday that Pollyanna roused from the,

dreamy mood that had lasted several weeks, and became, almost in a minute, her usual alert self. As it had rained furiously all the morning, and Pollyanna had a cold, they had not gone to church, but had spent a very quiet day, enjoying that sense of well-being which warmth and shelter are sure to give, when the elements are turbulent.

Along in the afternoon, Pollyanna, having finished a long letter to Sadie, laid down her pen and looked across the room to Jimmy stretched upon the couch, and quite absorbed in one of his birthday volumes of Dickens. He had hardly moved an inch in an hour and a half, yet Pollyanna, viewing him, gave a little start as if it were the first time she had seen him that day.

"Mr. Jimmy Pendleton," she exclaimed reproachfully, "you didn't shave this morning."

Jimmy felt of his chin with thumb and finger, and for a moment made no reply. Then he said abstractedly, "I'll do it to-morrow."

Pollyanna was still looking at him hard. "Did you shave yesterday, Jimmy?"

"No, I didn't. Meant to attend to it first thing this morning, but what's the use? Nobody's going to see me."

If Jimmy had not been concentrating his attention on the page of "Great Expectations," he would

have seen Pollyanna's eyebrows lift themselves to a supercilious altitude. But so intently was he following the fortunes of Pip that he failed to discover Pollyanna's resentment of the implication that she did not count. He turned a page and settled down to entire absorption in the story, while Pollyanna sat gazing at him with the interest of a scientist who has discovered an entirely unexpected trait in a familiar species of beetle.

Pollyanna believed implicitly that Jimmy was an extremely handsome young man, and, while the testimony of her eyes did not in the least alter that conviction, she realized uncomfortably that a total stranger, meeting him at this moment, might fail to grasp that very important fact. A two day's growth of beard detracted sadly from that high-bred air which was her especial pride. He had taken off his coat, which would have been all very well if his shirt had not been wrinkled. A pair of slippers, at four-thirty in the afternoon, added the final touch of informality.

The shortcomings of Jimmy's personal appearance, however, did not altogether account for Pollyanna's disquieted air. The thing that troubled her was the remark he had let fall so casually, "Nobody's going to see me." Yet, less than a year before, the knowledge that Pollyanna was to see

him would have been sufficient incentive for taking the greatest pains with his appearance.

Pollyanna's mood, as she sat pondering, was not morbid nor silly. She was not inclined to exaggerate the seriousness of the situation. Each day as it passed made her only more certain of the quality of Jimmy's love, and she knew that in essentials her approval or disapproval weighed more with him than the opinions of all the rest of the world together. But, at the same time, his perfectly innocent remark showed an attitude of which she could not quite approve. Pollyanna was shrewd enough to perceive that almost all human relationships are the better for a little formality, and she was quite sure that, if husbands and wives should make the same effort for each other that they do for total strangers, innumerable domestic complications would adjust themselves.

Pollyanna said no more about Jimmy's shaving. She was of the opinion that the woman who has to fall back on nagging to win her point is small credit to her sex. But she gave the subject considerable thought, with the result that, before she went to sleep that night, her plan of campaign was ready.

Pollyanna was one of the people who do not become disheveled in the ordinary routine of work.

Judith often commented on this peculiarity, with unconcealed exasperation.

"After I set the dinner table," she would say, "I need to fix my hair and powder my nose, and straighten myself generally if I'm to look right. And you can work all day and end up by scrubbing your kitchen floor, and be as trim as when you started."

And, while this was a trifle exaggerated, as Judith's speeches were likely to be, yet, when Pollyanna regarded herself in the mirror, about half past four on Monday afternoon, in spite of the fact that she had spent an extremely busy day, she was entirely presentable.

As she proceeded to dress for dinner, Pollyanna went about it in a most unexpected way. She took down her hair, gave it a shake, and then without the aid of comb or brush, twisted it into a hard, uncompromising coil at the back of her head. She took off the trim little frock she was wearing, and, after some search, found a dress sufficiently shabby to attract the attention of unobservant man, not an easy achievement for a bride of less than a year. But luckily Pollyanna had brought from home a blue serge which had done her such good service for several years before her marriage that she had no feeling of resentment over the discovery that the

elbows were through. In fact she had been keeping it in the house till she should find time to patch it, and clean off some spots which were reminders of an occasion when the frosting had boiled over, before contributing it to the supplies of clothing which were constantly being forwarded to the relief of ragged Europe. Pollyanna had reproached herself for being remiss about this work, yet now she found this same remissness an occasion for self-congratulation.

"Exactly what I want," she said as she surveyed herself in the mirror. "Oh, you disgusting dowdy creature!" And then she made a face at her reflection in the mirror, the image retaliating in kind, and thereby adding to its unprepossessing and unnatural appearance. This ceremony concluded, Pollyanna only waited to exchange her pumps for bedroom slippers — not the fancy pink mules which were reserved for special occasions, but an extremely practical and well-worn pair — and went blithely out to the kitchen to prepare dinner.

Jimmy came in about three-quarters of an hour later, and, as usual, Pollyanna was at the door to greet him. When he had kissed her he turned away to hang up his overcoat and then, turning back, he stood staring at her with distinct perplexity. Pollyanna had added to the effect she wished to produce

by tying a long-sleeved apron around her waist, using the sleeves in place of apron strings.

"Sick?" questioned Jimmy doubtfully.

"Sick! Of course not. Why?"

"Oh, nothing. Thought you didn't look quite natural, that's all."

"It's not worth while to bother putting on a long sleeved apron with this dress," Pollyanna explained. "It's a wreck anyway."

"Yes," Jimmy said thoughtfully. "I see." He followed her into the kitchen, studying the effect from the rear, with signs of growing disapprobation. Then he said almost gruffly, for Jimmy, "Hope that isn't a new style of doing the hair."

Pollyanna looked into the oven and continued to look for some seconds after she had satisfied herself that nothing was burning, in order to be sure that her face was sufficiently unexpressive. Then she said carelessly, "Oh, no, this isn't a style. I just didn't bother to fix it. Do you think it's warmer out, or is the weather man wrong again?"

Dinner was a rather silent meal. Pollyanna chattered a good deal to be sure, but Jimmy did not second her efforts in his usual spontaneous fashion, and, after the dishes were out of the way, and Pollyanna had seated herself in the living-room, without bothering to remove the unsightly apron, Jimmy said

a little sharply, "You're not going to wear that thing all the evening, are you?"

"What? This apron, do you mean? No, I'll take it off pretty soon."

"Take it off now, for heaven's sake! I'll hang it up for you."

"Oh, all right. Thank you!" Pollyanna removed the offending article and handed it to her husband, without glancing in his direction, and Jimmy, his expression vaguely disturbed, carried the apron away, though upon examination he changed his mind about hanging it up, and stuck it in the clothes hamper.

Pollyanna read her paper absorbedly, but Jimmy could not seem to concentrate on anything. He looked into two or three books and magazines, and decided against them, tried several chairs without finding any that suited him, and interrupted Pollyanna by irrelevant remarks.

"Saw Bob Bacon today, when I was getting my lunch," he observed presently. "His wife has gone home for a visit, and he's as lonely as a stray cat."

"You ought to ask him out to dinner some night this week."

"He said he was coming out soon. In fact, I shouldn't be surprised to see him this evening."

"This evening!" Pollyanna sprang up with a look of horror that made her husband start.

"Why, what's the matter?" he asked.

"You don't suppose I want Bob to see me like this, do you?"

Jimmy did not reply, and Pollyanna made a hasty exit. There was a period of splashing in the bathroom, and then, in the bedroom, a significant bustle. Now a bureau drawer opened and shut again. A closet door creaked ajar and was slammed to. Jimmy grew restless after a time, and strolled in to watch proceedings.

A pretty blue dress of Pollyanna's lay upon the bed, and a pair of little satin slippers, with rhinestone buckles, stood waiting to replace the bedroom slippers Pollyanna had been wearing ever since four o'clock. Pollyanna was arranging her hair in a rather elaborate and decidedly becoming style. She was too much absorbed in getting the right affect to pay any especial attention to Jimmy's entrance.

"You know," Jimmy warned her, "I'm not sure that Bob's coming."

"Yes. It's a pity you didn't have him fix on an evening."

"If I'd realized what a difference it would make, I'd have pinned him down. It would be terrible,"

said Jimmy with withering sarcasm, "if all this energy should be wasted."

"Yes. Wouldn't it?"

"Perhaps it will help a little in case Bob doesn't show up," remarked Jimmy with naive bitterness, "if I remind you that this blue dress is a particular favorite of mine."

Pollyanna turned her candid eyes upon him. "But you wouldn't expect me to put on that blue dress unless there was somebody here."

"You mean I'm nobody, I suppose." Jimmy's laugh was like a bark.

Pollyanna could contain herself no longer. She gave way to helpless laughter, and, when Jimmy looked at her reproachfully, she only laughed the harder. When at last she could control her voice sufficiently for speech she gasped out, "You began it."

"Began what?" asked Jimmy testily.

"Calling me a nobody."

"Calling you — say, what are you talking about?"

"Don't you remember when I wanted you to shave yesterday you said that nobody was going to see you."

"Well, by Jove!" Jimmy exclaimed, "I believe I did make some such fool speech." He looked at her hard and suddenly grinned from ear to ear.

"You little wretch, I believe on my soul you've been doing this to intimate that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander."

Pollyanna's face was a confession, yet under its mischief was something far removed from fun. And then in a twinkling her smile had disappeared, and she looked as if she wanted to cry. "I hate to feel that I don't count," she said a bit unsteadily.

"You not count? Why, as far as I'm concerned, Pollyanna, you make a majority all by your lonesome."

"I know I do in the big things, dear. But we women are so greedy. We want to feel we come first in the little things, too."

"Men are like that, too, Pollyanna. I own I felt sore when I thought you were dressing up for Bob, and didn't care a hang how you looked with nobody around but me." He added with a rather wry smile, "It was a good object lesson all right, honey, and I'm ashamed that I needed it."

As it happened young Bacon did not appear, but Pollyanna wore her blue dress and her satin slippers till bed time, feeling quite repaid by the admiration that looked out of Jimmy's eyes. And only Jimmy himself could have told what proportion of the admiration was due to the blue frock, and what was called out by something very different.

CHAPTER XVIII

TRYING OUT THE GAME

"Oh, dear! I certainly am the most unlucky girl. I wonder why every single thing I'm interested in is bound to go wrong."

Judith had considerable more to say along the same line. It had been a day of disappointment from the start. She had put her breakfast rolls into the oven to warm, and had taken them out as black and shining as if they were advertising a new brand of stove polish. It was the day for her mother's weekly letter, but it had failed to arrive, and Judith was working her imagination over-time, conjuring up all sorts of distressing explanations for its non-appearance. She had told Russell about a new spring suit she had seen in a window of one of the shops, marked down to half price,though as yet no one had thought of putting on spring suits, and Russell, instead of saying, "I don't know what you want of any more clothes" — always a tactless speech for a husband of limited experience — had seemed anxious that she should take advantage of the bargain, and the previous evening had brought

home the necessary funds. But when, on this day of misfortune, Judith had hurried down to make the purchase, the suit she wanted had already been sold, and those which appealed to her equally cost exactly twice as much. After a fruitless and disappointing search, she had returned home, in a dejected mood, to find a visiting card in her letter box, indicating that she had missed one of the very few calls she had received since becoming resident of the metropolis. And so Judith, flinging herself into an easy chair, gave herself up to the dangerous luxury of self-pity.

It was the recollection of Pollyanna's game that checked the flow of Judith's complaints. She had played it by fits and starts, ever since that sunny afternoon when Gladys Moore had challenged her to make the attempt, and, while her success had been variable, she had never reached the point of really wishing to give it up. Now it occurred to her that this was an opportune time for putting the game on trial, and proving, once for all, whether it would work.

It was not easy to deny herself the luxury of grumbling. So many people sacrifice almost everything worth while in life for this privilege that Judith's reluctance to forego the indulgence did not stamp her as peculiar. She sat for a little, hesitating

between the satisfaction of giving herself up to acute misery and the satisfaction of trying out Pollyanna's plan, and, after five minutes or so of vacillation, she suddenly reached a resolution.

"It's just four o'clock and there are about seven hours till bed time, and whatever happens before then, even if the house burns down, I'm going to find something to be glad about."

It was surprising what a change of mood resulted from that determination. Judith was conscious of an immediate uplift of spirits. She glanced toward the window under the impression that the sun must have come out from under a cloud, and then laughed as she realized that the sudden brightening of her surroundings was due to a radiance from within.

"I won't have to get dinner for an hour yet," said Judith in the buoyant tone that befitted her resolution. "I'm glad there was some dessert left over from yesterday. Now I'll have a good rest and feel fine when Russell comes."

She stretched herself on the couch and picked up a magazine for entertainment. Luckily it was a magazine with wholesome, cheery stories, instead of one of the sort which advertise their superiority by giving detailed accounts of the psychological reactions of a group of decadents. Judith had a number of good laughs before it was time to set about pre-

paring dinner, and, as a result, was more than ever in the mood to play the game.

Russell came in about dinner time, moving wearily, and with an overcast face.

"That confounded elevator is out of order again," he announced angrily. "If it goes on a strike, it's bound to be when I'm especially tired. I'd like to make the owner of this house walk up and down stairs till he either died of heart failure or put the elevators into shape."

"You do look tired," Judith exclaimed sympathetically. "I'm glad we don't have to go out this evening."

An expression of surprise crossed Russell's face. He had not been anticipating an answer of this sort. It was not the first time he had grumbled over the unsatisfactory elevator service, and Judith was very likely to reply, "Oh, yes, you notice it when you have to walk upstairs. If you had any idea how many times I climb those flights, and often with a heavy market-basket, you'd realize that you're not the only sufferer."

Having expected a reply of this sort, Russell looked a little taken aback, his sensations suggesting those of one who, thinking there is still another stair in the flight, finds himself already at the bottom.

Russell's mood was faultfinding. As he took his

seat at the table, he said gruffly, "Went to a new lunch room to-day, and it's the worst yet. Some of these fellows ought to be prosecuted for the stuff they serve. As for the cooking, I could do better myself."

"Well, I'm glad that it wasn't so good that it will make you discontented with what I'll give you," laughed Judith. "I know I'm pretty poor at times, but anyway I'm not as bad as all that." And she derived a demure enjoyment from Russell's half-startled glance across the table.

Judith was not blessed with Pollyanna's quick intuition. The assumption that all women are endowed with intuition is as absurd as the companion claim that all men are reasonable. But as the meal progressed, she began to realize that Russell's impatience and irritability were symptoms of something wrong. He was either sick or worried, and she was determined to find out which was the case.

"Don't you feel well, Russell?"

Had he been out of sorts physically, the inquiry would have gratified him. Few people are so strong-minded as not to be pleased when their indisposition attracts the attention of their friends, while the opportunity to talk about any complaint, from a sore throat to high blood pressure, is too tempting to the average victim to be resisted. When Judith's inquiry illicited from her husband an impatient

frown, as a preface to his reply, she knew she had guessed wrong.

"Of course I feel well. Can't you see I'm eating my dinner? I wouldn't be likely to do that, would I, if I wasn't all right."

"Then what's bothering you?"

Russell's hesitancy was unconscious pretense. He knew immediately that he would answer that question in full. He longed, as all of us must, to share his trouble with a sympathetic listener, and though he was a little uncertain as to how Judith would receive part of this confidence, the need of confiding in someone overbore his doubt. The story came out with a rush. He had loaned a fellow employee thirty dollars, with the understanding that it was to be paid back the first of the month, and now the first of the month had come, and his debtor not only had failed to make payment, but had seemed quite indignant over being reminded of his obligation.

"You never saw anything so cool," declared the exasperated Russell. "He seemed to think that a fellow must be a regular Shylock to want his money when it was promised him. And the worst of it is that I don't know how the deuce I'm going to meet my Building and Loan payments."

Judith had needed to fortify her resolution several times while this narrative was in progress. She had

ached to say, "Why on earth did you let him have the money? You haven't any more than you need yourself." She was tempted, also, to assure him that he would never see a penny of that thirty dollars again. "It's plain that he's a dead beat. What a pity we didn't use that thirty dollars having a good time. I'd rather spend it on a real blow-out than throw it away on anybody like that." But, as none of these comments impressed Judith as being in keeping with the resolution she had made at four o'clock, she listened in silence till she saw her chance, and then she exclaimed, "Oh, Russell!"

"Well?"

"You know the money you brought me last night, for that suit I wanted. Well, when I went down today it was sold, so I didn't buy anything. That will help you out with your Building and Loan, won't it? I'm so glad now that somebody else got that suit before I did."

Russell laid down his fork and sat looking across the table at his wife, with an inscrutable expression. Then suddenly he rose, went around to her chair, and put his arms about her. Such interruptions to the sordid business of three meals a day are not likely to be unwelcome to any wife. Judith submitted radiantly to the prospect of having her chop grow cold uneaten.

"Judith," Russell said meekly, "I don't believe I've ever done you justice. I was half afraid to tell you about this, for fear you'd say I was a fool to lend Marsh the money."

Judith thought of the sharp speeches that had risen to her lips, and been restrained only by a supreme effort, and a fitting humility blended with her sense of satisfaction. She put her hand up against his cheek, and Russell stooped and kissed her.

"I'll take that money back," he said, "because I'm in a hole, but next month you shall have a spring suit whether Marsh comes across or not."

They finished their dinner in course of time — it did not matter whether it was earlier or later, for neither one was at all interested in the clock — and spent the hours that intervened between that and bed-time getting acquainted. Both Judith and Russell were legitimate products of the age of hustle. Their idea of having a good time was to go somewhere, and spend an immense amount of energy doing something, reaching home at a late hour and in a state of exhaustion which made the simplest remark an effort. Their conversations were almost always superficial, and Judith knew very little more about the man who was her husband than she did a month after their marriage. But this evening,

encouraged by the discovery that his wife was a plucky pal, instead of a fretful child, who must be kept in the dark regarding everything vexatious or alarming, Russell opened his heart to her as never before. And so the two laid the foundation of that sympathetic understanding which is proof against the fluctuations of passion, and the best safeguard of married happiness.

Judith fell asleep that night feeling strangely light-hearted. She had resolved to discover something to be glad about in everything that happened during a specified time, and unexpectedly she found herself glad without trying. The game had stood the test. It had worked! Judith's last waking thought was a grateful recollection of her neighbor. She turned her face toward the wall, on the other side of which, in all probability, Pollyanna lay asleep, and whispered tenderly, "Pleasant dreams, Pollyanna, dear."

CHAPTER XIX

SECRETS

It had been the most wonderful day of Pollyanna's life and the longest as well. Every time she looked at the clock, she felt certain that it had stopped, and was quite astonished, when she went close, to find it ticking away with its usual unhurrying rhythm. She was counting the minutes till Jimmy's return, for she had a secret to tell him, the most marvelous secret in the world. On the whole she was inclined to think that it would not be necessary for her to say a word, that as soon as he looked into her eyes he would read there the heavenly truth.

One of Pollyanna's cherished treasures was a picture of Jimmy, taken soon after his adoption by John Pendleton, a manly little fellow standing up to the ordeal of facing a camera, as he had stood up to harder things in his short life. The freckled face was sternly resolute, the boyish smile almost grim. Viewed merely as a photograph it left much to be desired, but Pollyanna loved it because it brought

before her so clearly the Jimmy she had first known. She took the picture in its little silver frame from her dressing-table, and studied it with absorbed attention, trying to fancy how Jimmy must have looked years before that picture was taken, when a fuzz of down was the sole prophecy of his heavy thatch of dark hair, when his delicious twisted smile revealed toothless gums, when the art of speech was yet to be mastered, and when his chubby legs, though capable of very vigorous kicking, were quite useless for purposes of locomotion. Pollyanna would have given almost anything she possessed to have secured a picture of Jimmy as a baby.

"I shall call him James," Pollyanna remarked in confidence to the photograph which stared back at her in the most uncompromising fashion, as if to intimate disapproval of her decision. Pollyanna had no intention of changing her method of addressing her husband. Jimmy was Jimmy. While she recognized James Pendleton as a very estimable young man and admired him extremely, she doubted ever feeling really acquainted with him as she did with Jimmy. Pollyanna was not referring to her husband when she announced her intention of calling somebody James.

She sat with the little silver-rimmed photograph

in her hand, her heart full of a rapture so unselfish and so beautiful that she felt herself akin to everything high and holy. It would hardly have surprised her if suddenly an angel had stood before her and called her blessed. Only she did not feel any need of angelic assurance. Never had God seemed so close as now, when, in entrusting, to her, life's supreme responsibility, He had blessed her beyond all computation.

When Judith's knock at the door roused her from her reverie, Pollyanna felt the need of veiling the brightness of her face, as Moses did, when descending from the Mount. She feared the radiance of her look would betray the heights where she had stood, and Jimmy must be the first to know her secret. Yet, though she made an effort to banish the evident traces of that inward joy, she was not quite successful. Judith on entering glanced at her casually, and then blinked, as if dazed.

"Pollyanna dear, how perfectly lovely you look! You make me think of a garden full of spring flowers."

"Oh, that's too much of a compliment, Judith. It would be enough to say that I reminded you of a daffodil or narcissus. There's not enough of me for a garden."

Judith slipped an arm about her friend and hugged

her fondly. "There's not so much of you in pounds, but in other ways there's enough of you to make a park, all full of lovely things. Pollyanna, do you know I really think I'm going to make a success playing your game."

"Why, of course," said Pollyanna.

"No, it's not 'of course,' at all. I botched it for a long time, but at last I think I'm started." And Judith told of the resolution made the previous day, and of subsequent events, while Pollyanna, filled with that strange sense of remoteness from an earth where trouble and anxiety are factors to be reckoned with, listened and smiled, and made the proper answers, feeling all the time as if she were speaking from a great distance.

Judith's call was a long one, and to Pollyanna it seemed even longer than it really was, because of her apprehension that she would remain till Jimmy came. Pollyanna loved Judith, but that prospect made her uneasy. There are some little garden spots in experience where there is room only for two. Some of life's sweetest music is written for two voices, and a third, no matter how sweet in itself, makes a discordant note. Pollyanna was honestly thankful when Judith kissed her good-bye. As her guest stepped out into the corridor, Pollyanna heard Jimmy's voice greeting her in gay

friendliness, and she held the door ajar. It seemed to her that all her life, without knowing it, she had waited for that moment.

Jimmy came into the hall, and, without speaking, took her in his arms. She felt at once something new in the quality of his clasp. He strained her to his heart as if they had been separated for a long time — or as if they were on the brink of a separation. For a moment she thought that her half-fanciful expectation had been realized and that, at the first glimpse of her, he had known all she had to tell him. But when suddenly he sighed, a sigh heavy with foreboding, she drew back, to look into his face, and a little shiver ran over her.

"Jimmy dear, something is wrong, isn't it? What has happened?"

He hesitated as if seeking an answer that would not distress her, and finally said, "Nothing has happened — exactly."

"But haven't you something to tell me?"

"Yes, dear, I have." Again he hesitated. Then he frowned impatiently. "I'm a fool to blurt this out the minute I'm inside the house. We'll talk it over later, when we've been fortified by a good dinner."

There was no longer any need to veil her face, to hide that tell-tale radiance. All day she had walked

on air. Now she felt the need of placing her feet securely on the solid earth. She went about the work of preparing dinner, rallying her courage to meet bravely whatever the future held; but the glory of the day had set with the sun.

They made a rather pathetic pretense of small talk at dinner. Jimmy joked a great deal, told a number of stories, quite forgetting the point of one, laughed more than was necessary, and helped himself twice to everything on the table, though Pollyanna would have taken her oath that he hardly knew what he was eating. They made slow work of the after-dinner tasks. More and more Pollyanna dreaded the coming of the moment when she should hear Jimmy's secret. Something urged her to exaggerated deliberation. She took time for a number of quite unnecessary things, obeying humanity's unfailing instinct to put off the inevitable. But when, at last, he followed her into the living room and took her hand, she knew the time had come.

"Sit down beside me, darling, and help me all you can. It's not going to be easy to say what I've got to tell you."

"Jimmy," Pollyanna answered, white-lipped, for all her brave words, "whatever it is, it is all right."

Apparently her answer did not make it easier for him. He turned away his head, but not too quickly

for her to see that the tears had started to his eyes. He waited to speak till he could be sure that his voice was quite steady.

"Pollyanna, there's no longer any doubt that America's going into the war. Breaking off relations with Germany isn't enough. We've got to help in the job of saving civilization. And you and I must do our bit."

Her hand stirred in his and he tightened his hold upon it. Otherwise neither moved.

"There comes a time, dearest, when a man feels that his own life and happiness hardly counts. He's in the grip of something bigger than his little hopes and ambitions. It isn't that I'm forgetful of what I owe you. My heart turns to water at the mere thought of leaving you, and of what you may have to suffer. But I haven't any right to let selfish considerations hold me back. America has kept out too long as it is. Now we've got to atone for our holding back by giving without reservation of our money and our men, and settling things up. And I must do my share."

He had looked away as he talked, as if he could not bear to face her while breaking her heart. Now he turned his head, met her brave eyes, and suddenly broke down and wept. He fell on his knees beside her, hiding his face in her lap, his shoulders heaving

as he tried to strangle his sobs. Pollyanna, bending over him, stroked his hair and murmured tender, comforting things. Her own eyes were quite dry.

She waited a little before putting the question that meant so much to her, and then no one could have guessed, from her quiet voice, how her soul hung on his answer. "When do you think they'll want you, Jimmy?"

"I shan't wait to be called. I'm going to throw up my job and go to Plattsburg to be ready as soon as possible." His sobs had quieted under her comforting touch. He got out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes shamefacedly, and then looked up at her with a watery smile. "Didn't know I was such a baby," he apologized.

Her answering smile showed that she disdained to recognize this to the extent of giving it an answer. She went on stroking his hair, with a hand curiously steady, and he caught it, and kissed the blue-veined wrist, stirred to wondering reverence, like many another before him, by this revelation of strength in a representative of what has so long been designated "the weaker sex." When he again took his place on the couch beside her, he tried to prove that he had completely recovered his poise by beginning to talk immediately of those practical questions which soon must be decided.

"I don't know what you'd prefer to do, Pollyanna. Of course you can always go back to Aunt Polly. But now there'll be a great deal more than enough work for everybody. It might be easier for you if you stayed on in New York, and got a position of some sort."

Pollyanna's lids dropped over her eyes, suggesting the lowering of an asbestos curtain before a brightly lighted stage. "I think," she said quietly, "that I'll go home to Aunt Polly."

"Well — that's for you to say, dear." The slight hesitancy with which he received her decision suggested surprise. He waited a moment and then went on, "As far as your ever needing anything is concerned, I'm not anxious. I can trust Uncle John to look out for you, as if he were my real father, instead of an adopted one. That is another reason why I should be one of the first to go. There are so many fellows with wives and children entirely dependent on them. However they long to help, they'd feel that they couldn't, don't you see?"

Pollyanna saw quite clearly. "I'm glad, Jimmy," she said, "that you're free to do the thing you feel is right."

"And you understand, Pollyanna, it's not because I don't love you that I want to go." That obsession of his generation, a dread of sentimentality, made

it hard for him to bare his heart even in this supreme moment, but he went on stammeringly, "One of the old fellows back in the days of Queen Elizabeth, or pretty near, said it for the millions of us who can feel things but aren't much on phrases. Don't you remember:

> 'I could not love thee, dear so much
> Loved I not honor more.'"

True son of the twentieth century, he laughed feebly at himself. "Don't make fun of me for quoting poetry to you," he begged.

The asbestos curtain was up now. The eyes she turned on him were ablaze with love and pride.

"Jimmy, I'm glad you're exactly as you are. It doesn't seem as if I could bear it to have you the least bit different."

For the remainder of the evening they discussed plans *pro* and *con*. Whether it would pay to move their furniture to Beldingsville or be better to sell it. Whether Pollyanna should stay in the apartment till their lease expired, or sub-let it, and so on through a long list. And Jimmy, as if trying to atone for his break-down, was extremely matter-of-fact and Pollyanna met him fully half-way. A listener to the conversation would have gathered that the separation, looming ahead, was hardly more

serious than a long business trip. But, though they talked of so many things, some important and some trivial, not one word did Pollyanna say of her great secret.

CHAPTER XX

BREAKING UP

Pollyanna was breaking up housekeeping.

Of all sights which suggest desolation, with the sole exception, possibly, of flame-gutted homes, standing in ruins, the most dreary is a house dismantled for moving. The pictures which gave pleasure to the eye have disappeared from the walls, leaving discolored spots, rectangular or oval as the case may be, brighter than the surrounding surface. Innumerable nondescript articles, counting so little individually, but contributing in their entirety so much to the cheeriness, — vases, card receivers, statuettes, doilies, pieces of bric-a-brac, have vanished from view. The rugs, rolled into long cylinders, stand on end in corners, out of the way. Chairs, which once gave you open-armed welcome, have disappeared from their accustomed nooks, and, when you find them, the chances are that they are overflowing with a miscellaneous collection soon to be crammed into a trunk already more than full. Comfort and order seem as remote as the pyramids.

The peace of home is like a poem you learned long ago and have all but forgotten.

Pollyanna had stayed on in the apartment till the expiration of her lease, because, illogically, New York seemed so much nearer than Beldingsville to Plattsburg, which had now become the centre of her universe. She had rented her two bedrooms to two business-like young women, deep in war work, and not too business-like to be immensely interested in certain young officers of whom they talked all but continually. She herself had slept on the couch in the living-room when she could sleep at all. But scarcely a night passed that she did not lie awake for hours thinking of Jimmy, and of the secret she had resolved not to share with him as yet.

Pollyanna's long training now stood her in good stead. She had another life to think of, and, for the sake of that dear new life, must preserve a tranquil spirit. She made it a point of conscience to take the best possible care of herself. She walked for an hour or two in the open air every day, she ate regularly, even though her food had no savor. When she lay awake at night, she did not weep nor give herself up to brooding and apprehensive thoughts. Instead she gloried in her husband's courage and loyalty, and thanked God she had told him

nothing which might hold him back from doing his duty as a citizen.

They had given up the idea of moving their furniture to Vermont, after making inquiries regarding freight rates. Indeed, viewing it as a purely commercial transaction, they had done very well in the disposal of their belongings. The prospective absorption of the energies of the nation in the production of war material had sent the price of all manufactured articles soaring skyward. Thanks to Pollyanna's scrupulous care, their furniture looked almost like new, and it brought much nearer the original price than is generally the case with articles designated second-hand. But unluckily Pollyanna found it hard to consider the matter from a purely practical standpoint. These possessions, which she and Jimmy had purchased for their first home together, had a value which had nothing to do with dollars and cents. She had almost forgotten to be brave when a purchaser took her china away, one hundred and seven pieces, and not a crack nor a nick after a year of service. She fancied some servant dropping those dainty cups into the dish-pan with a crash, snapping off a delicate handle as indifferently as if handles grew like finger nails, and she could not keep from wincing. It was like handing some little creature, that had been petted and made much

of, over to the tender mercies of one who might neglect it or even be cruel.

Little of that which they had called their own was going to Beldingsville beside their wedding gifts and their books. Pollyanna felt an illogical thankfulness that nobody wanted their books sufficiently to offer a price that it would seem foolish to refuse. In the rushing, roaring city no one had time to read. Pollyanna wrapped Mrs. Browning's poems reverently in a newspaper, and fitted the book into the box where a number of similar treasures already reposed. And just then the bell rang.

Pollyanna had been interviewing so many people who wished to buy dining-room chairs or a walnut dressing table, that the buzzing of the bell suggested only the arrival of another stranger, bent on a like errand. She did not take Judith into consideration, for she had gone to a Red Cross gathering, to receive instruction in making surgical dressings, and would not be back till five or later. Pollyanna snatched off her sweeping cap, smoothed her hair with a hasty stroke, and disregarding the further short-comings of her personal appearance, went to answer the summons. She waited with what patience she could muster for the tall lanky man in the corridor to announce his errand, then started, with a cry of recognition, "Why, it's Mr. Moore. Do come in."

Mr. Moore entered, casting a discriminating glance over the disorder. "Looks as if you was leaving," he commented.

"Yes, Jimmy is going into the service. He's at Plattsburg now. And as soon as he goes across, I shall go back to my old home in Vermont."

As she talked, Pollyanna was bustling about to find a seat for him. Having forced an easy chair to disgorge a pile of neatly folded clothing, she drew it forward invitingly, and seated herself on a dry-goods box, packed with alternate layers of bedding and pictures.

The father of Gladys sat down in the awkward fashion she so well remembered, stretching out his long legs in front of him and crossing them at the ankles.

"Well, I guess it's in the air," he said. "We're moving, too."

"Oh, indeed! Where are you going, Mr. Moore?"

"Do you remember me telling you about a little town in Ohio where I was raised? Well, we're going back there."

Pollyanna's face brightened at the news. "Are you really? I know you're glad of that."

"Yes, I'm glad. It's a better place for the boys to grow up in than this town. Of course I shan't

build till the war is over, but it will be easy enough to get a comfortable house, and it'll be something like living. I guess I'll have to keep on working while this war lasts. Don't look as if it was just the time for anybody's taking things easy. But I can find something to keep me busy pretty near anywhere, I guess."

Pollyanna wondered uncomfortably as to Mrs. Moore's attitude regarding the proposed step. She remembered Gladys' blazing indignation that a woman of her mother's social gifts should be asked to bury herself in a small town. And then it occurred to her that she had not inquired after Mrs. Moore's health, and she made haste to repair the omission. "I hope your wife has quite recovered from her accident."

Mr. Moore uncrossed his legs, the process suggesting the straightening of tangled skeins of silk, and crossed them again before speaking.

"Yes," he said at last, "Mrs. Moore is 'round the same as ever, except ——" He hesitated and looked at Pollyanna as if pleading with her to help him out. "She won't ever look the same," he ended abruptly.

"Not look the same?"

"She was pretty badly cut up, you know. I had the best surgeons, but it left her — scarred. I

s'pose you'd say it was kind of shocking. I don't know. She's my wife, and she'd look all right to me no matter what happened to her. But she's done with the crowd she used to travel with. Says they'd make fun of her. That's what she says. *I* don't know."

Pollyanna's heart swelled with poignant pity. She could read between the lines of the story so haltingly told. The little, silly, shallow woman, scarred and disfigured, caring only to hide away from those she had called friends, was a figure which would touch sympathies less responsive than hers. She thought what this calamity would have meant to Gladys, and the tears rose to her eyes.

Mr. Moore saw her emotion and turned toward her confidentially.

"I'm going to talk plain to you," he said, "because you're one of the safe kind. A blind man could see that. And, besides, you knew a good deal about our affairs, anyway. So I don't mind telling you that this has kind of helped my wife and me to get our troubles straightened out."

"Has it, Mr. Moore? I'm so glad."

He sat frowning at the bare wall opposite, plainly trying to find words to make his meaning clear.

"Of course, if I could take those scars off my wife's face, by losing my right arm, I'd do it in a

minute — any man would. But, at the same time, it looks as if this trouble had sort of wiped out our other trouble. My wife knows this would make a difference to most of her friends. She don't want to see 'em or hear from 'em. But it's a big comfort to her to know that it don't make a dang bit of difference to me. She's my wife, and my caring about her hasn't anything to do with her looks."

Again Pollyanna read between the lines. She could easily guess that to this vain, frothy little woman, halted suddenly in her career of flirtation and frivolity, it was an immense comfort to find that to one loyal heart her changed appearance made no difference whatever.

" She's kind of shy about being seen," Mr. Moore continued. " She don't like to go out without me, and then she'd rather go after dark, and she wears a pretty thick veil. At first she used to talk about killing herself, but she stopped that after — after she saw what it would mean to me to lose her."

Pollyanna gave his arm a little sympathetic pat as he took out his handkerchief and openly wiped his eyes. For the first time she understood how Gladys was what she was. That passionate loyalty of hers was a heritage from her father.

" As soon as we get moved," said Mr. Moore, in a resolutely cheerful voice, " I'm going to buy a car.

She'll get lots of pleasure out of that. She says she can never be happy again, but I'm not so sure, even though — you see, Mrs. Pollyanna, the hurts on her face are healed up and there's only scars left. But the hurts on her heart are open scars. She can't get over thinking about Gladys."

"Of course not," Pollyanna agreed. Her opinion of Mrs. Moore had never been complimentary, but, if she had been able to think of Gladys without anguish of spirit, she would have fallen even lower in Pollyanna's estimation.

"She feels," explained Mr. Moore earnestly, "that if she'd been a different sort of mother, Gladys would have been alive today, and that's kind of started her to think about what's best for the boys. She's got lots to learn — so've I, for that matter," Mr. Moore amended humbly, "but we both of us are beginning to see that being parents calls for more than just providing your children with food and clothes."

He took out his watch, stared at it unseeingly for a moment, then closed the case with a snap, and returned it to his pocket.

"The boys have told me a good deal about something Gladys picked up from you. She called it a game, and the idea was to find something to be glad of, whatever happened. She talked to the boys about

it quite a lot, and they remembered more than you'd believe. I guess you know what I'm referring to, don't you?"

"Yes," said Pollyanna, her eyes very bright. "I know."

"Well, it kind of looks to me as if, in all this awful trouble that has come upon us, there's something to be thankful for. We're closer together as a family than we ever were before. Of course we'll make lots of mistakes, on account of not knowing how, very well, but my wife and I mean to keep trying, and I believe things are going to come out all right."

He looked at his watch again, and this time really saw the hour. He snapped it shut and jumped to his feet.

"Well, I must hurry along. Pretty busy times when you are breaking up. But I had to see you before we left. You know, I don't often let go of myself as I have today, but you're Gladys' friend, and — well, you're the kind that's easy to talk to. God bless you, Mrs. Pollyanna, all the days of your life."

He wrung her hand till it hurt, and went away, wiping his eyes openly, and Pollyanna, standing in the midst of the confusion and disorder, thought of Gladys and the tears ran down her cheeks.

"You dear little girl," she said aloud. "If you knew about all this — and I'm almost sure some angel will tell you — how glad — how *glad* you must be."

CHAPTER XXI

GOOD-BYE

After leaving her own apartment, Pollyanna stayed with Judith for a week, doing so large a share of the housework that Judith frequently declared that she felt as if she were making a visit. For that matter, both girls worked tirelessly from early till late, spending most of the daylight hours at the Red Cross, knitting through the evening, and sometimes falling asleep in their chairs from sheer over-fatigue. Pollyanna was never too busy nor too tired for her daily letter to Jimmy. Long letters they were, too, full of things calculated to make him laugh. The story of the socks Judith knitted, which absolutely refused to be mates, was told so entertainingly that Jimmy chuckled over it at intervals for a week. Pollyanna saw many sights these days calculated to bring the tears rather than smiles, but of these she said nothing in her letters. Nor did she say a word of the matter which would have interested him more profoundly than anything else in the world.

On her way to Beldingsville, she stopped at Plattsburg for a few days, — days she would not have

exchanged for the promise of as many years in the distant future. The work going on there would have made a profound impression on a mind more critical than hers, though perhaps her confidence that a certain cadet, James Pendleton by name, was the most soldierly and magnificent figure in the entire encampment, might not have been as generally accepted as she supposed. Of course, Jimmy had comparatively little time to give her, but to watch from afar the maneuvers of the khaki-clad figures, of which he was one, was a joy only second to that of the hours when the round of drill and duty ceased to claim him. They always made haste to leave the camp for some spot where they could talk undisturbed, though, as a matter of fact, they seldom spoke of what was nearest their hearts, but only of commonplace matters that all the world might have heard. Even happier, Pollyanna thought, were the moments when they did not try to talk at all, but sat silent hand in hand, perhaps perched on the high cliffs through which the river had cut a deep gorge, or sitting in the shade and quiet of the woods. Pollyanna had little thought to spare for nature just then, yet she discovered afterward that those scenes to which she had seemingly given such scant attention were etched ineffaceably on her memory. She could shut her eyes and see again,

with perfect distinctness, the sheer walls of the cañon, the turbulent water, the falls, the spray flung skyward, breaking the sun's rays into the colors of the rainbow.

A little more than a year from the time she and Jimmy had waited for the tardy train that was to bear them away into the new life, Pollyanna came back alone to Beldingsville. The station had not changed perceptibly since the day she had come on to Aunt Polly from the west, a little girl with flaxen braids and such a hungry heart. The station had not changed, but life had. Remembering that lonely child, who, for all her desperate playing of the game, felt so friendless and forlorn, Pollyanna thought herself rich indeed.

There was no Timothy with the old-fashioned buggy to meet the train, as on Pollyanna's first arrival, but a handsome limousine, drawn up near the little station, made it look smaller and shabbier than ever. On the station platform was quite a group of people and, as Pollyanna recognized one after another, their names burst from her lips in jubilant exclamations.

"Aunt Polly! Oh, dear Aunt Polly! Why, Uncle John! And Aunt Ruth! And Sadie and Jamie! Oh, how wonderful!"

They gathered around her like swarming bees about the queen, and there was not enough of her for the outstretching arms. Everyone wanted to hug and kiss her at once, and so the moment Pollyanna had dreaded, the home-coming without Jimmy, lost its terrors and became a beautiful memory.

"How do you all happen to be here?" Pollyanna demanded, as she walked to the waiting car, several arms around her waist, and in such a tangle that she could not for the life of her have told to whom they belonged.

"Well, we generally spend most of the summer in Beldingsville," said Mr. Pendleton. "There has been so much to do this year that we're late getting away. But your aunt needs a rest, sadly, and we thought the change of air would be a good thing for Jamie."

Pollyanna, glancing over her shoulder, caught Jamie's eye. She had been on the point of inquiring about his health, but something in his resentful gaze taught her better.

"I don't believe a word of it," she declared merrily. "Nobody needs a rest and nobody needs a change. You're here just because you thought I'd be glad to see you, and I love you all for it."

Indeed, the way was to be made unexpectedly

easy for Pollyanna. In this crisis Aunt Polly proved a tower of strength. Not for nothing was she a descendant of the Harringtons. One of her ancestors had fought at Bennington, and in each of the nation's wars since the family had been represented. Aunt Polly could be fretful, complaining, and easily disheartened over the ups and downs of every-day existence, but now her country was at war, and she stood up, as unruffled by the hardships and distresses of the time as a pillar of granite.

"Jimmy has done exactly what I expected," declared Aunt Polly, as soon as she had Pollyanna to herself. "Of course he's not really a Harrington, but he represents the family. It's all very well for the others to wait till the draft, but not one of our men."

Aunt Polly had never seemed in better health than now. She had plunged into Red Cross work with a zest that would have been creditable in a woman half her age. The country was the only thing that mattered now. She could spare no thought for personal disappointments or suffering. The life or death of the individual, whoever he might be, mattered little, so that the Republic lived. There had been times in Pollyanna's remembrance when Aunt Polly had diffused an atmosphere suggestive of a warm, muggy spring day, extremely relaxing.

But now she was as exhilarating as an October gale.

Pollyanna improved an early opportunity to inquire about Jamie, and Aunt Polly compressed her lips and shook her head.

"They're worried about him and I don't wonder. He's none too strong at best, and now he's fretting himself to death because he can't do a man's part in this war. Poor fellow."

"But he *can* do a man's part," Pollyanna cried, knitting her brows protestingly. "One who writes as he does can help wonderfully."

"I'm afraid," objected Aunt Polly, "that writing things will seem to him a very poor substitute for fighting. At least," she ended magnificently, "if I had a son, I should expect him to feel that way."

Pollyanna did not attempt to change Aunt Polly's opinion. She reserved her fire for Jamie, who, she was sure, would not be long in voicing similar sentiments. And, as a matter of fact, he came over the next morning, bringing a dinner invitation from Mrs. Pendleton, and at once made Pollyanna the confidante of his wretchedness.

"I don't know how to bear it, Pollyanna; honestly I don't. I'd give all the rest of my life to have Jimmy's body just one year. Think of the things that are happening on the other side, and me tied

to my crutches, a baby to be coddled and fussed over. You heard Uncle John say that they thought a change of air would do me good. That's the sort of thing that hurts. Jimmy can go across to France and risk his life every hour in the day, and I have to be moved around from place to place, like an old woman, in hopes that the change will benefit me."

Pollyanna looked at his quivering face with more sympathy than she dared disclose. She said quietly, "Seems to me you forget how much you can help by your writing."

"Writing!" Jamie laughed mirthlessly. "A good, safe job!"

"A pretty necessary one," Pollyanna replied with spirit. "You don't imagine, Jamie, that everybody in the United States is as loyal as we are here in Beldingsville, do you?"

Jamie looked at her with a change of expression she was quick to note, and she went on earnestly, "If you can write things that will rouse the people who are only half awake, and win over the half-hearted, you'll be worth as much as any man who goes to France."

She could see by his intent look that she had made an impression.

"I suppose there is something to be done along that line," Jamie acknowledged at last.

"And then you can write things that will help the boys in the camps, and after they get across. You know, Jamie, that, when the first excitement is over, and the days are just alike, hard and monotonous, with nothing to break the routine, but danger — " For a moment her voice shook, then quickly steadied — "it's going to be hard for lots of them. When war meant marching and fighting at close quarters, and charging the enemies' lines, I believe it was easier than it is now, when they dig themselves in and stand in trenches, waiting to be killed. If you can write things that will help to keep their patriotism at white heat, you'll be doing as much as anybody."

"By Jove," shouted Jamie, sitting forward on the edge of his chair, "you're right about that."

"You might even write a song," cried Pollyanna, taking fire herself, as she watched his kindling face. "Think of having the men in the camps singing one of your songs, Jamie, and forgetting all their fears and doubts and grumbling, everything but the chance to serve their country. Wouldn't you rather have written the 'Battle Hymn of the Republic' than to have been one of the generals at Gettysburg? I would."

Jamie caught her hands. His face had changed almost beyond recognition. It was aglow with

eagerness. His new-born enthusiasm had brought the blood tingling to his cheeks. His eyes were pools of light.

"Pollyanna," he gasped, "if I could do that, it would count as much as fighting."

"You can do *something* that counts," Pollyanna insisted. "You're making a name for yourself, and ever so many people are all the time looking for your next book. Write things that will help make us all brave and more loyal, and you won't have reason to envy anybody."

"I'll do it," Jamie cried. He was still holding her hands tightly and he gave each a little squeeze before relinquishing them. "Pollyanna, you've made me feel as if I could start in playing your game again. I've been making a fizzle of it lately, things have been so unspeakably hard."

Pollyanna shook her head at him reproachfully. "That's just the time to play it for all you're worth."

"I suppose so, but you don't know ——" Jamie stopped, looked at her closely and bit his lip. "Pollyanna, forgive me. You do know if anybody does. I've been such a selfish coward, wrapped up in my own troubles, that I haven't been able to realize that other people were having a hard time, too. But if *you* can play the game now, surely I ought to be able to play it."

Pollyanna was astonished to find it so easy to slip back into her old place. There were the same duties to be performed that had been hers when she was Pollyanna Whittier. Her room at Aunt Polly's was exactly as it had been when she was a little girl. Possibly the rugs were a shade more worn, and the brass bed a trifle tarnished, but the pictures on the walls, and the very wall paper, for that matter, were the same. Nancy's sister worked for Aunt Polly now, but she looked so like Nancy, ten years before, that Pollyanna was continually calling her by that name and then begging her pardon. It gave her a feeling of youth and inexperience to be addressed everywhere as Pollyanna or Miss Pollyanna. Out of all the town, the Fisher family alone recognized her matronly dignity, addressing her formally as "Mrs. Pendleton," when meeting her, and then sweeping past with an air of great aloofness.

"Sometimes I almost feel," Pollyanna wrote Jimmy, "as if our year together were a beautiful dream. When I wake up in the morning and look around my little room, I almost wonder if it's time to start for school and if I know my lessons. Isn't it queer how one can change so much one's self, while the rest of the world seems to stay just the same?"

Aunt Polly furnished the theme of many of

Pollyanna's letters. She had a feeling as if she were just becoming acquainted with this surprising relative.

"You never saw anything like Aunt Polly, Jimmy," she wrote him on one occasion. "She's the spirit of '76 embodied. She's the head of the Red Cross here, and it is astonishing how much the women accomplish. There's a Mrs. Neuman who's come here since we were married, and is Aunt Polly's right hand man. But even the ones who aren't as competent as she is, are so in earnest that it does your heart good to see them. And Aunt Polly leads them on like a general. I'm proud to be a humble relative."

Though she carried a bright face along the shaded streets of Beldingsville, and spoke as cheerily as if she did not have a care in the world, and worked incessantly, Pollyanna was secretly living for Jimmy's furlough. She would have two weeks of him to herself before he was assigned for duty at one of the cantonments. It had been arranged that she should motor with Mr. and Mrs. Pendleton to Plattsburg when Jimmy's period of training was ended, and bring him back in the automobile.

Sometimes the hours we have longed for most make the greatest demands on our courage, and so it was with Pollyanna. For, when the three of

them motored to Plattsburg, Pollyanna's heart singing like a bird, Jimmy had something to tell her that ruthlessly checked that music. He had a lieutenant's commission — Pollyanna was surprised not to find him a captain — and he had volunteered for immediate overseas duty. They were in need of engineers and had accepted him.

Pollyanna held her hand against her heart as she listened. War puts the quality of men and women to the test, but no soldier, going over the top in the face of murderous fire, ever needed courage more than Pollyanna did at that moment. Yet, when he dared look down at her, she was smiling.

"We've got two weeks anyway," said Pollyanna. "Two whole weeks, fourteen days, how — how many hours would that be, Jimmy? You know I'm not good at arithmetic."

It had always amazed her that Jimmy could perform such complicated arithmetical processes without the aid of pencil and paper. Almost immediately he told her that fourteen days were three hundred and thirty-six hours, and Pollyanna clutched at the information thankfully. Three hundred and thirty six! She rolled the numerals under her tongue, and would not let herself think how swiftly an hour passes. But something of her old childish resentment at the necessity for sleep came flooding back

upon her. It seemed hard to be forced to waste in oblivion the hours that might have been spent in living.

Three hundred and thirty-six hours has an impressive sound, but when every day swallows twenty-four of them at a gulp they dwindle fast. Every day that passed, Pollyanna found it harder to be herself. She grudged every moment that Jimmy was out of her sight. She was almost angry with Jamie for taking time to read to him some patriotic articles he had been preparing. When her husband looked at her, she was always smiling, but sometimes the smile was a little forced, and the lips rather white.

The night before Jimmy left she did not sleep a moment. She lay tense and wakeful, listening to his tranquil breathing, praying for him, loving him, thanking God that, whatever the future held, she was his forever. And in the morning it was a lieutenant of the American Expeditionary Forces that broke down and wept. Pollyanna's eyes were tearless.

"My little love! My little wife. Forgive me for bringing this heart-break on you."

Pollyanna lifted her eyes, and the memory of that steadfast face, colorless but illumined by some

mystic radiance, was something he would carry with him while he lived.

"Jimmy dearest, I want you to remember this. Whatever comes to us now, the thing I am gladdest for in all the world is that we have had our year together."

Outside the house the horn of John Pendleton's car honked warningly. There was time for one more kiss. This was good-bye.

CHAPTER XXII

POLLYANNA DOES HER BIT

THE oracles who insist on the importance of living in the present would have found Pollyanna a refractory disciple during the months that followed Jimmie's departure. From her standpoint, the present had little to offer, and she dared not look ahead into the future. Day by day as she went through the routine of her work — and she left few minutes unaccounted for — she really was living in the past, talking with Jimmy, walking with Jimmy, basking in the light of his frank eyes, listening to his buoyant laughter. It was Beldingsville and its inhabitants that seemed remote and dream-like. The real world was the world of the past, to which Jimmy belonged.

In due time there came to her the official announcement of his safe crossing, and then, straggling along, at distressingly protracted intervals, his precious letters. She wrote daily as she had written him at the encampment, and as cheerily as ever. There was much of interest to tell, for he, like herself,

knew practically every man, woman and child in the town, and would enjoy the bits of news she gathered for his entertainment. She was sure, however tragic his environment, he would chuckle when she told him of Nancy's confidence that he would soon be commander-in-chief of the American forces in France. Nancy had been quite positive about it.

"That General Pershing looks real nice in his pictures," Nancy acknowledged generously, "but Mr. Jimmy's got the pep, he has, he has. And oh, my! Don't he look just grand on a horse?"

In course of time Pollyanna confided her secret to Aunt Polly and more than ever was she convinced that she had never done her relative justice. Aunt Polly sat staring at her for a long moment, as if she found it hard to believe her ears. And then she asked in a curiously husky voice, "And you've never told him yet?"

"No. I was afraid — I didn't want to make it harder for him."

Aunt Polly got up and walked to the window. She seemed intensely interested in the scenery, so much so that Pollyanna wondered uneasily if there could be a fire in the distance to absorb her attention so long. But when she faced about her expression revealed a tenderness she did not often show. For

the time being, her New England reserve had the worst of it.

"Pollyanna," Aunt Polly began impressively, "Vermont has a right to be proud of its daughters. Of course," she amended, with a negligent wave of her hand, "you were born in the west, but you are a Vermonter by blood, and one of a long line of heroic women. Molly Stark ——"

"Oh, Aunt Polly," exclaimed the overwhelmed heroine, and burst into tears. It really seemed more than she could endure at that moment to be named in a list headed by Molly Stark. She felt that Aunt Polly was eyeing her with consternation, and did her faltering best to explain. "I'm not crying because I'm sorry," she sobbed. "I'm glad, awfully glad, to have you proud of me. Only I'm a little frightened for fear you'll think I'm braver than I am. There are times when it's all I can do to be glad for anything."

"I should think so, indeed," murmured Aunt Polly. And from that day a certain protecting tenderness in her manner toward Pollyanna was increasingly in evidence.

They both spent a great deal of time at the Red Cross. Pollyanna hated making surgical bandages, because of their ghastly suggestiveness, but she did her best to forget the purpose for which they would

be used, and struggled to keep her thoughts busy with something quite different, while her fingers went on mechanically with the allotted task. There were other young wives in the group that met day after day, suggesting in their white aprons and the white veil-like coverings for their heads, novices in some religious order. Then there were mothers of boys in the service, capable, middle-aged women, who talked bravely and worked tirelessly, and helped to keep the spirit of the group at concert pitch. Indeed, Pollyanna was conscious of a curious sustaining power in the realization that she was one of millions of women, women of every race, who were giving their all to a cause dearer than life.

And so the days slipped away, one like another except for the changes of the seasons — the shortening days, the increasing cold, the exchange of green fields and leafy woods for stretches of dun-colored meadow and bare boughs. And then this was in turn exchanged for a world all white and glittering. Pollyanna had never minded the cold, but this winter she sometimes shivered in her warm bed, thinking of Jimmy and wondering if he had blankets enough. His letters were always cheerful, too cheerful indeed, to be convincing. She would hide her face in the pillow when the wind howled outside, and pray God that he was warm.

It was a relief to her when the Red Cross workers dropped surgical dressings for a time, to prepare the comfort kits for men about to go overseas. The money for the fittings had been raised by an entertainment given in the town hall, and smaller affairs at several private homes. Pollyanna worked happily at this new occupation. Instead of detaching her mind from the purpose of what she was making, as she was forced to do in the case of the surgical dressings, she liked to fancy the pleasure of the recipient. Even though their clumsy, unaccustomed fingers might make hard work of threading a needle, the boys would find needles and thread most convenient on many an occasion.

"I declare you look happy," Milly Snow said to her one day, as they worked side by side, "smiling away to yourself just as if — how do you manage it?"

Pollyanna glanced up brightly. "Was I smiling?" she asked. "I was thinking of a time when my husband tried to sew on a button and it was so funny. I was kneading bread, and he wouldn't wait for me to finish."

She stopped her work to laugh, and Milly Snow gave her a side-long look, her eyes wide with admiration. And she told her mother that night, "She's the same Pollyanna that she was when she

was little, only more so. Didn't folks used to think there were seven wonders in the world? Well, Pollyanna Whittier makes eight."

In connection with the comfort kits, Aunt Polly had a bright idea. She announced it one afternoon when there was an especially large attendance at the Red Cross gathering.

"I think it would be a good idea to send a personal note with each one of these kits, not a long letter of course, but a little friendly greeting."

Mrs. Neuman spoke up from the other side of the room. She was as tireless a worker as Aunt Polly herself, always present, always eager to do her full share, or even more.

"I think that is such an excellent idea, Mrs. Chilton," she exclaimed, "and if you are willing I shall be glad to undertake writing the notes."

Familiar as Mrs. Chilton was with the unremitting industry of her valuable aide this offer caused her to start uncertainly.

"You don't mean all of them, of course."

"Yes, certainly. I will write them all myself."

"It will mean considerable work. My intention," explained Mrs. Chilton, "is to have each one different, so that, if the boys compare them, they will still feel that each greeting is personal. They must be tired of machine-made sentiments, poor lads."

"I quite agree with you," cried Mrs. Neuman again. "And I promise that each note shall be different from all the others, quite, quite different."

"I am sure you are undertaking a great deal," said Mrs. Chilton in a tone of hearty approbation, "and that the rest of us appreciate it from our hearts. Then, if there's no objection, we will leave the writing of the notes to Mrs. Neuman."

None of the workers objected. Indeed, to many of the women the pen was the most awkward of implements. The broom or needle or mixing spoon they were quite at home with, but they would have been at a loss if called on to compose a single note of greeting for an unknown soldier going overseas. An enthusiastic murmur ran around the circle, corroborating the leader's expression of appreciation.

When Mrs. Neuman brought the notes, a few days later, ready to be enclosed with the completed kits, they had a very business-like appearance, tied together in bundles of a dozen. But, as Mrs. Chilton picked up the topmost bundle, she was surprised to find that each note had been sealed with red wax.

"Oh!" she exclaimed impulsively, "I thought you'd leave them open."

"Oh, did you!" Mrs. Neuman looked vaguely troubled. "I thought that sealing them would make

each boy feel that his letter was really meant for him. Anything unsealed suggests an advertisement, don't you think so?"

"I thought we should all enjoy hearing a few of them read."

Mrs. Neuman's pained expression became more pronounced. "I'm sorry I didn't understand. But I'm afraid it would make me uncomfortable to hear my efforts read before an audience. I made each one very personal, you see. I put my whole heart into it."

The tone of plaintive disappointment suggested to more than one present that Mrs. Chilton was showing less appreciation of loyal service than the occasion called for.

"Polly Harrington always did think that her way was the only way," one matron whispered to her neighbor. "That poor little woman looks most ready to cry. 'Tisn't as if she was one of us, and could take her talk for what it was worth."

Mrs. Chilton felt the reproachful glances leveled in her direction and hastened to make amends.

"Of course, it's not a matter of any real consequence," she said. "I'm sure that, knowing Mrs. Neuman as we do, we can feel confident that the letters will be just the sort to cheer and inspire our boys, and perhaps she is right in thinking that seal-

ing them will make each recipient feel that his letter was meant for him personally."

The kits were packed that afternoon, each one containing one of Mrs. Neuman's letters, and Mrs. John Pendleton, who was back in Beldingsville for a couple of weeks, offered to drive Mrs. Chilton and the box down to the express office. "And then I want you to come back home with me, and hear Jamie's patriotic song. It was sung in New York all last week, and the audiences went wild over it. The next thing they'll be singing it in the camps, and the boy will be beside himself with happiness."

"I'd love to hear it, and Pollyanna must come, too," Aunt Polly said. But for once Pollyanna did not snatch at an invitation.

"I believe I'll go home, if you don't mind. I'm a little tired. And besides I want to write to Jimmy."

"You're feeling all right, aren't you?" asked Aunt Polly, looking Pollyanna over with a searching glance that seemed to defy her to try to hide anything.

"Oh, I'm perfectly all right, except a little bit tired."

"Then let me drive you home before we go to the express office," suggested Mrs. Pendleton.

"There'll be plenty of time. This package won't leave till the five forty-five train."

Pollyanna shook her head. "Thank you, Aunt Ruth dear, but a little walk will do me good. I'm not tired from exercise so much as from sitting still. Of course I want to hear Jamie's song very, very soon. Please give him my love and congratulations when you write him."

And so the limousine glided in one direction over the snow-covered streets and Pollyanna started in the other. She had not walked half a block, however, before she realized that she had forgotten her fur neckpiece. She turned back quickly, reproaching herself for her carelessness. To run any risk of contracting illness when so many of the country's physicians were in the service, and the remainder so sadly overworked, impressed her as a most unpatriotic proceeding.

The Red Cross meetings were held in the chapel of Rev. Paul Ford's church, the chapel where once Pollyanna had pleaded the cause of Jimmy Bean before the Ladies' Aid. Though Pollyanna's return had been so prompt, the chapel was empty. Only the old sexton was in evidence, painstakingly sweeping up the litter which told of the afternoon's activities. Pollyanna stopped to explain to the old man

the reason for her reappearance and he grunted assentingly.

"' They's alers leavin' suthin', women folks is. Lucky their heads is on tight, or they'd be forgettin' them, too."

" Oh, Mr. Potts," Pollyanna protested gaily, " you mustn't be too hard on us."

But Mr. Potts held tenaciously to his grievance.

" Some one of 'em left a letter lyin' on the floor. Hain't got no stamp, hain't got no address, but I s'pose, ef that letter don't git to the one 'twas meant for, some woman will be raisin' Cain. No matter how hard a man tries to please 'em, he's alers in hot water."

He brought her the letter as he grumbled on, and Pollyanna at once recognized it as one of the many little notes Mrs. Neuman had written and sealed. Her first feeling was one of regret. One of the kits, apparently, had gone without an accompanying note. Some soldier would be disappointed. Then it occurred to her that, since Aunt Polly had wished to read some of Mrs. Neuman's notes, here was her chance.

As Pollyanna stood looking at the blank, sealed envelope, she suddenly found herself eager to open it. The impulse surprised her, shocked her slightly. With all her profound interest in whatever concerned

other people, she had always thought herself above prying curiosity. Yet, even while she recoiled from the idea, it became more insistent, almost clamorous. She began to find excuses for it.

"It's not as if it were a letter to anybody — anybody special, I mean. Anyone could read it, who cared, — but I don't know why I should want to."

She ended the inward debate by tearing open the letter in obedience to that dominating and inexplicable desire. Her eyes followed the lines down the page, and her hand went up to her throat. Mr. Potts turned about, as a queer, choking sound reached his ears.

"Shoo! 'Tain't bad news, is it?"

Pollyanna did not answer him. For the moment her brain was entirely absorbed in the incredible words before her.

"Greetings to you, poor fool, interfering in the quarrel of your betters. Know that, within half a year, you will be a German prisoner, or else your carcass will lie rotting in the land you talk about saving. Fool, you cannot even save yourself. You are doomed."

Old Mr. Potts came hurrying across the room, quite forgetting his cynicism in view of Pollyanna's

incomprehensible emotion. "Was it for you, after all?" he panted. "Hope 'twarn't bad news."

Still Pollyanna neither heard nor heeded. All at once she realized that something must be done. Those horrible letters must never leave the village. She ran past the gaping old man into the stinging air of the outside world. Young Jerry Reed was just passing, driving an old grey horse, hitched to a low "pung" in which Greyson's Grocery delivered its patrons' orders during the winter months. As Pollyanna broke through the intervening wall of snow, and ran into the road, holding up her hand commandingly, the boy pulled up his horse, staring down at her in consternation.

"Turn around instantly, Jerry, and drive me to the express office."

"I don't see how I can do that, Miss Polly — I mean Mrs. Pendleton. I'm late now with Mrs. Doctor Warren's order, and, if I'm any later, I'll get a good layin' out."

As Jerry protested, Pollyanna had climbed to the seat beside him. "Turn at once," she said. "Drive as fast as you can. Take the whip."

Jerry's mouth fell ajar in a bewilderment almost comic, yet he recognized the voice of authority. Without a question or another word of protest, he turned the sled about, and started back in the direc-

tion from which he had come. And, as Pollyanna continued to urge haste, he plied the whip with a zest which inspired the old grey horse to unprecedented speed. The sleigh bells jangled jubilantly, and behind them Mrs. Doctor Warren's groceries danced a jig, leaping out of the box which contained them, high in the air, and falling back again with a thud, only to repeat the performance. Pedestrians on the sidewalk turned to stare. Yes, that was Pollyanna Pendleton perched on the driver's seat beside Jerry Reed. And where on earth were they going in such a hurry?

At the express office Pollyanna had her first experience with red tape. When she learned that the package Mrs. Chilton had brought fifteen minutes before had not yet left the office, she innocently supposed that her work was done. But Mr. Cooper proceeded to explain that he must send the package to the station immediately. Mrs. Chilton had been very particular that it should get off on that quarter of six train.

"But I've found out something she doesn't know about, Mr. Cooper. She won't want it to go, now."

Mr. Cooper was sorry to appear unobliging. Pollyanna was not to construe it as personal, but in an office like this there were such things as Rules and Regulations. And while she was Mrs. Chil-

ton's niece, and as a man he knew her to be strictly all right, as an official he could not regard her as qualified to give orders regarding the matter. In short she was not the shipper.

Time was flying. Pollyanna saw it would be necessary to let him know the truth. She held up the unaddressed letter, its red seal still intact before his eyes.

"Mr. Cooper, that package contains comfort kits for the soldiers. With each one is a letter written by a woman in this town. They were brought sealed. But fortunately one of them was overlooked. I opened it and read it, and I'll ask you to read it, too."

Mr. Cooper drew out the enclosure, deliberately adjusted his spectacles and began to read. He interrupted himself a moment later by a roar of rage. Rules and Regulations meant nothing to him now, for he had a boy in France.

"Who wrote that letter?" he cried, pounding on the counter. "Tell me the name of the woman who wrote that letter!"

"I think I'd better not say any more now, Mr. Cooper. But I'm sure there'll be a way of dealing with her. Just keep that package till my aunt sends for it."

"I'll keep it till the war's over, if you say so,"

replied Mr. Cooper, and he added grimly, "I b'lieve I could make a pretty good guess, as to who wrote that letter. We Beldingsville folks know each other pretty well, and there's not so many strangers among us. I think I can guess who she was, all right."

Pollyanna was surprised to find Jerry Reed outside. Her voice was full of self-reproach as she addressed him.

"Oh, Jerry, I didn't expect you to wait for me, I'm so sorry. I was in a hurry to get to the express office, but I can walk home."

"You climb right in, Miss Polly — I mean Mrs. Pendleton. Mrs. Doctor Warren's so mad a'ready that she can't get no madder. And I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb."

Pollyanna climbed in. She was beginning to feel tired and was less disturbed than she would ordinarily have been at the thought of Mrs. Warren's justifiable indignation. She left Jerry to do the talking, as, at a brisk rate of speed, though not by any means equaling their recent performance, they drove to Aunt Polly's door.

There was a limousine standing outside, and indoors a clearly nervous Aunt Polly questioned an equally nervous Aunt Ruth.

"What can it mean, Ruth? She's had a great deal more than time enough to get here."

"Probably she thought of some errand she wanted to attend to," Mrs. Pendleton suggested, soothingly, though her manner was uneasy. "I wouldn't worry."

"She said she was too tired to come with us, and I can't imagine why ——"

"Here she is now!" The relief in Mrs. Pendleton's voice, as she interrupted, showed that she had been more anxious than she would acknowledge.

Pollyanna came in, holding out the letter with the red seal. "Read it, Aunt Polly! Read it."

The curious intensity of her manner checked Aunt Polly's questioning. "Why, it's one of Mrs. Neuman's notes."

"It was dropped and I opened it. I've been to the express office and Mr. Cooper will keep the package till you send for it."

She dropped into a chair, while Mrs. Chilton drew the letter from its envelope. The exclamation that fell from her lips almost immediately brought Mrs. Pendleton hurrying to her. Together they read and re-read the astonishing production, with cries of horror and indignation, as they realized how their confidence had been betrayed.

"That woman isn't to get off scot-free," declared

Mrs. Chilton excitedly. "This may not be the worst thing she has attempted, and there are laws that will apply to her and her kind."

"I'll call John on the phone," cried Mrs. Pendleton. "He'll know exactly what to do."

A little sound attracted their attention, and they whirled about. As easily as a vessel glides down the ways to the waiting water, Pollyanna had slipped from her chair and lay unconscious on the floor. For the first time in her life she had fainted.

CHAPTER XXIII

READ OVER A SOLDIER'S SHOULDER

"To Lieutenant James Pendleton.

"— th Engineers.

"Nine pound boy. Mother doing well. Congratulations.

"John Pendleton."

From Mrs. Thomas Chilton.

"My dear Jimmy: —

"The last two days have been so full and so exciting that I am not at all sure that I can compose myself sufficiently to write a satisfactory letter. But while your uncle cabled you yesterday, the cable service is slow and uncertain, and even if you receive his message promptly, you will of course be eager for details.

"My dear Jimmy, you are the father of a splendid little son. As you know, I am not a person of prejudices nor one whose judgment is swayed by her emotions, but I can frankly say that I have never seen such a young infant who impressed me

as so truly remarkable. From the top of his head to the tips of his toes he is every inch a Harrington. Indeed, it is quite thrilling to recognize the family features, one after another, in this latest descendant. His broad forehead suggests my Grandfather Harrington, and his chin has a firmness which reminds me strongly of my dear father.

"Our dear Pollyanna is an ideal patient, and so blissfully happy that it brings the tears to my eyes just to look at her.

"And I must tell you, my dear nephew, of still another reason you have for being proud of your wife. The local Red Cross has been nourishing a viper in its bosom in the shape of a woman calling herself Mrs. Neuman, a new-comer in the town. She appeared intensely interested in the work, and when she offered to write the notes to accompany the comfort kits, which were to be distributed to soldiers going overseas, her offer was gladly accepted. But, thanks to Pollyanna, it was discovered that instead of containing kindly messages, these notes were indeed the product of a poison pen, the emanations of a heart filled with treachery and cruelty. It will always be a matter of regret to me that, owing to Pollyanna's sudden illness and the consequent distraction of our thoughts, the monster escaped. It is supposed that a thoughtless

remark let drop by the grocer's delivery boy, who had driven Pollyanna to the express office, warned the Neuman woman that her crime had been discovered. She left town on the midnight train that same night, taking with her only such belongings as could be carried as hand luggage. As she rented the house furnished, that only meant the abandonment of a few articles of clothing. Temporarily she has eluded justice, but I hope and pray it may yet overtake her.

"The box containing the kits was already at the express office, but, thanks to Pollyanna, did not leave town. After the baby's arrival, your Aunt Ruth and I opened the box, destroyed the letters of that obnoxious woman and wrote others to take their place. We were busy until past two o'clock last night, after getting practically no sleep the night before. If my handwriting is at times almost illegible you will understand why.

"We think of you constantly and your name is on our lips a hundred times a day. That this terrible war may soon end, and you be restored safely to those to whom you mean so much is the fervent prayer of

"Your devoted aunt

"Polly H. Chilton.

"P.S. I have just taken a peep at your son. He is asleep, of course, but something in his placid expression reminded me strongly of my great-uncle, David Harrington."

From Mrs. Timothy Durgin.

"Mr. Jimmy, dear sir:

"Please excuse the liberty for Timothy says I should say lootennant but even if you get to be a genral you will be Mr. Jimmy to me and I am writing to say that you have the nicest baby that anibody could ask I have seen a great many for my mother had eleven and large families was always the rule with our folks but I must say that I've never seen such a baby as this one and he is the living image of Mrs. Pollyanna bless her dear heart the same forehead and the mouth and chin and everything and I believe he is going to be just such another little angel

"We are doing like you said Mr. Jimmy and looking after them the best we know how Timothy is worried because I do not call you lootennant Pendleton but if I did I should feel as if you was a stranger and I could not write at all Timothy and I send our best respects

"Yours truly

"Nancy Durgin."

From James W. Carew, Author.

"Dear old man:—

"You're surely one of the lucky ones. When you sailed for France, your lot seemed to me so enviable that I could have hated you if I hadn't liked you so well. And now you're the father of a son, who, according to reports from Uncle John and Aunt Ruth, is simply the prize baby, bound to win the blue ribbon in any competition.

"It seems almost presumptuous to talk to a fellow in the service, and doing the real things, of my superficial work, but I manage to keep occupied. All the writing I am doing at present is designed to help along the only thing that matters now, the winning of the war. And quite to my astonishment I've discovered that I can make a speech. I was roped into that work, during the last Liberty Loan Drive, when some speaker disappointed the committee. Though I had had no preparation, I did well enough so that they asked me to speak again. Since then I have been working hard at speech making, and making more of a hit than I would have dreamed possible.

"I'm enclosing a typewritten copy of my song, which seems to be taking well, and, as Pollyanna would say, I'm glad. It's not high-brow stuff, you see, but apparently it has the punch. The music is

by Dixon, the composer of, 'The Morning Glory Girl,' you know, and other popular successes. There's a swing to it that delights me. What I want is to have the boys in khaki singing it. Then I'll feel that I've done something.

"Dear old chap, when you get back, just think what a reunion we'll have. You can tell us all about your battles, and I'll tell what may be worth telling about my work, and the girls will be so absorbed in the baby that neither of us will count one, two, three. Sadie joins me in sending love. God bless you, Jim.

"Your friend
"J. W. C."

From Mrs. James Pendleton.

"Jimmy dearest: —

"Today is an important anniversary. Our son is having a birthday. He is just a week old. And our nurse, who is a combination of a perfect angel and a terrible tyrant, has said that I can write you a letter piecemeal. That is ridiculous because I feel strong enough to write a dictionary, and glad enough to write a poem, and thankful enough to write a book all filled with prayers. The little row of dots, you will see every now and then in this letter are the places where I've had to stop and rest.

Oh, she is coming now to take away my pencil, the heartless thing. . . . . .

"Jimmy, he is perfectly wonderful. To begin with, he looks exactly like you. He even has that stern, resolute expression you had when you were a little boy. His forehead and chin are yours to the life. A baby's nose is always a baby's nose, but I can see that his is going to be straight and distinguished, like your own. And Jimmy, when he scowls — really he has the most violent temper for a child a week old — he is the image of you when you are cross. It's perfectly killing. Oh, dear, here's that nurse again. . . . . .

"I had a wonderful letter from Judith yesterday in answer to Aunt Polly's note telling her the news. Russell is in the service, you know, and Judith is up to her ears in war work. When I remember how aggrieved she used to feel over doing the housework in that tiny apartment I can hardly believe she is the same Judith. This war, terrible as it is, has made many an irresponsible girl into a woman, and many a no-account boy into a man. Don't you think so? Of course, Judith is crazy to see the baby, and she thinks, when the weather is warmer, she will be able to come up for a week or two. I'm sure she'll be ready for a vacation, at the

pace she is going. It is time for our son to have his dinner. He is the greediest youngster. . . . .

"Jimmy dearest, I sometimes think that, if you were to walk into the room this minute, my heart would be so full of joy that it would stop short. Perhaps it is just as well that I should have time to get accustomed to this blessing, before I have you both together. Oh, Jimmy, when I remember the forlorn little Pollyanna who came to this dear town, fatherless, motherless, almost friendless, and then realize how rich I am now, I have to struggle to keep from crying from sheer gladness.

"The baby has just been crying. He has such lungs. The nurse says that it is a very good indication. Really, dear, it isn't because I'm his mother that I think him a most unusual child. Every one says the same. Oh, my darlingest darling, how I long for the day to come when God will give you back to me, and you can see him for yourself.

"With my dearest love,

"POLLYANNA.

"P. S.. I shall call him James. There can be only one Jimmy — in our family, anyway — and I remember your saying, years and years ago, that you thought Jamie 'a sissy name.' So, when I think of it, I address him as James, but it does seem a little more natural to say Baby."

CHAPTER XXIV

JIMMY KNOWS A GOOD THING

THE Beldingsville trains had a penchant for being late. That had been true of them as far back as Pollyanna could remember. If the war had not added materially to their reputation for tardiness, it had furnished them with an excuse for the same, and people in general accepted the situation and said nothing. Yet, as Pollyanna waited in the station that spring afternoon, listening to the big clock on the wall, and thinking what an extraordinarily long interval there was between ticks, she was inclined to resent the fact that the engineer of the express had not realized that this was an especial occasion, and brought his train in on time.

Jimmy's telegram had reached them that morning, taking them completely by surprise, for, in order to avoid possible disappointments, he had named a date, still two weeks in the future, as the earliest moment it would be safe to expect him. And Pollyanna, sitting demurely in the corner of the station, her eyes upon the too deliberate clock,

and her pulses racing, as if in the hope of shaming it into emulation, reproached herself for her impatience. He was coming back to her two weeks earlier than she had dreamed of seeing him, and yet she was fretting because a train was three-quarters of an hour late.

At last the whistle sounded at the crossing half a mile from the village, and Pollyanna stood up trembling. There was a rather surprising representation of the population of Beldingsville at the station that afternoon. A number of the town's residents were in the habit of going down to the station just about the time the Boston train was due, largely because this gave them an agreeable sense of contact with the big world. Then there was generally someone going away, or some passengers arriving, and this furnished material for conversation at the supper table. But today word had gone abroad that Jimmy Pendleton was expected back, and a great many people discovered they had errands which would take them in the vicinity of the railway station about four o'clock. Many tender and sympathetic glances were leveled in Pollyanna's direction as she came out upon the platform, but a feeling of delicacy kept her friends at a distance, and on the whole it was as well that

they did not try to speak to her, for she would have found it hard to listen to what they were saying.

The long train pulled in. There was the usual wait before any passengers appeared, and Pollyanna could hear quite clearly, above the snorting and puffing of the engine, the pounding of her heart. What if he had not come? After all these months of separation, she was suddenly convinced that she could not possibly endure waiting to see him till the next train.

One or two people left the forward coaches, and looked around in surprise at the unusual crowd. Then something like a cheer ran from one end of the platform to the other. Pollyanna's hands went fluttering to her throat. A man in uniform had stepped from the rear coach, but it could not be Jimmy. He was bigger than Jimmy, for one thing, and browner than Jimmy, and with a decidedly more military bearing. Then she knew that, in spite of all these astonishing changes, it really *was* Jimmy. She started in his direction, but stopped short, overwhelmed by an absurd and unprecedented shyness. She could not run to this magnificent Jimmy as she would run to the Jimmy of yesterday. He must come to her.

Apparently Jimmy thought so, too. He traversed the station platform with long strides, and, before

the watching eyes of all the people, his hungry arms went round her. Again the men cheered, and the women fluttered their handkerchiefs, after which they used those same handkerchiefs for a more prosaic purpose, wiping their eyes and blowing their noses audibly.

Jimmy and Pollyanna were blissfully unaware of this little byplay. They were conscious only of each other.

"Are you glad to see me?" Jimmy was demanding, between his kisses.

"Yes, I'm — terribly glad," Pollyanna gasped. "Only — I think I'm a little afraid. You seem so different, now you're a captain."

Captain Pendleton disdained to reply. With his arm around his wife's shoulders, he looked anxiously about him, apparently searching for something. "Why," he exclaimed in a tone of disappointment, "I thought ——"

"Yes," laughed Pollyanna, "I know you were expecting your son here to meet you. But he happened to have a very important social engagement this afternoon."

Captain Pendleton's expression became aggrieved. "Well, I like that."

"It's your own fault, Jimmy." Pollyanna was forgetting her qualms, now this majestic being was

proving himself merely human. "You said that it would be two weeks longer before you could possibly get here, and we had to keep doing something, or we would have gone crazy. At the time of James' birthday, a number of children had the measles and Aunt Polly said we would have his birthday party later, when the weather was warmer and everybody was well. And it just happened that we'd fixed on today."

Jimmy reflected. "Well, let's go to the party," he said, "I'm ready."

Their progress along the platform was slow. Now that the husband and wife had greeted each other, old neighbors and friends pressed forward. Beldingsville had followed every step of Jimmy's progress with breathless interest. They knew just where his medal had been won, and they were a unit in declaring that he should have come out a major. Pollyanna was radiant as she listened to their greetings. She could have hugged the bronze men who wrung her husband's hand, and assured him that the town was proud of him. She could have kissed the women who made him blush by the warmth of their praise. The little Vermont village was dearer to her that day than ever before.

At the end of the platform a surprise awaited them. Standing in the whip-socket of Lew Car-

roll's shabby hack, was an American flag, and Lew, who had served in the Spanish-American war, stood at salute as Captain Pendleton approached.

"It's a proud day, Cap'n, for us all. This ole shebang o' mine is set up to have you for a passenger. Even the hosses feel as frisky as colts."

He held the door open for them to enter, and then, climbing to his seat, drove away with a flourish.

Within the recesses of the cab Pollyanna chattered breathlessly and always of trivial things. In our intenser moments, small talk serves the purpose of a sluiceway, relieving the pressure of emotion that might easily become intolerable. The grip of Jimmy's hand on hers hurt, and yet he could not hold it tightly enough. But their talk was of commonplaces, our instinctive refuge when joy or pain puts our self-control to the severest tests.

"When your telegram came this morning," prattled Pollyanna, "we thought at first we'd have to postpone the party, and then Aunt Polly decided that the sensible thing was to go ahead with it. You see we had made the cakes and ordered the ice cream — for the mothers, not for the babies — and, besides, having so much to do helped us to get through those endless hours before four o'clock."

Jimmy put the hand he held to his lips.

"What do you think of me? All those hours in that infernal train, and nothing to do but listen to the interminable stories of some of my fellow travellers. Only I didn't listen."

"Poor darling! Did it seem long?"

"A lifetime!" Jimmy said and relinquishing her hand stooped to her eager lips.

At the house Aunt Polly was waiting near the door. She was flushed and excited, but tremendously aware of the necessity of living up to the standards of the Harringtons, at a moment like this. Close behind her was Nancy, in the whitest of ruffled aprons, and with the reddest of cheeks, squeezing her handkerchief into a little ball, and swallowing continually.

Aunt Polly spoke with fine dignity, "Welcome home, dear boy. We are proud of you." She kissed her towering nephew-in-law as if she were conferring upon him the order for Distinguished Service.

Then Aunt Polly had the shock of her life, for Nancy's emotions had reached the point where they could no longer be restrained. She threw her arms around Jimmy's neck, gave him a resounding smack, and burst into tears. "Oh, Mr. Jimmy," she sobbed, "of all the days the good Lord ever

made, this is the wonderfulest and the gladdest, it is, it is."

"Nancy," exclaimed Aunt Polly, in an awful voice, "upon my word!" And then she paused. Captain Pendleton had returned Nancy's hug with interest, and kissed her quite as emphatically as she had kissed him, and was calling her a blessed old girl. And Aunt Polly, instead of continuing her scolding, only smiled feebly, and shook her head as if to intimate that the ways of the new generation were past understanding.

And now the greatest moment of the day had come. Pollyanna tugged at her husband's sleeve, and he turned quickly to follow her. The mothers of the visiting babies had gone to the dining-room for their ice cream, and the little folks had the front room to themselves. There were eight of them, recruited from the village and the outlying farms, and, as all the toys of James Pendleton, Junior, had been brought downstairs for their entertainment, Aunt Polly's living room presented the appearance of an unusually well-populated nursery.

Jimmy stopped in the doorway and looked wonderingly about him. For the moment the children paid little attention to him. The room was full of delightful primitive babble, in which occasionally a trained ear might have detected an intelligible word.

But, for the most part, all eight babies were talking at once in a language no adult could hope to understand, although, apparently, it met every requirement of the voluble users.

A little creature, near the door, trotted on its knee a Teddy bear almost as large as itself, keeping time to an improvised chant. Close by, a larger child piled blocks laboriously one upon another, though so inaccurately that each time the tower measured four blocks in height it toppled over. Other babies were shaking rattles furiously. One mite hugged to her heart a rag doll, with a black Topsy-like face, and crooned over it maternally.

Pollyanna, standing at her husband's side, saw his face clouded by an expression of perplexity. The eight babies represented a considerable range in age, from six months to eighteen, but Jimmy's experience was not sufficient for enabling him to estimate the degree of development to be looked for in a child the age of his son and heir. He saw that some of the little heads were practically bald, that others were covered with the tiniest curls, while one was distinguished by a real head of hair. He noticed that some of the soft, cooing mouths were toothless, while others displayed anywhere from two pearl-like appendages of the upper gum to something suggesting a set of teeth, at least to a

casual observer. But which of these alluring mites of humanity was his offspring he had no idea. Except for the little creature whose ecstasy over the rag doll revealed her femininity, he did not really know which were boys and which girls.

Jimmy turned his eager glance upon his wife.

"Introduce me, Pollyanna. I can't stand the suspense any longer."

Pollyanna's eyes laughed back at him. The reaction from the strain and terror of the past two years had made her feel ridiculously like a little girl. There was pure mischief in her smile.

"Pick him out, Jimmy. Do you mean that you can't tell your own child? For shame."

Jimmy shook his head doubtfully and advanced into the room for the purpose of giving its occupants a closer, more detailed study. The babies for the first time became aware of him. The Teddy-bear, the blocks, the rattles, a fine rubber cow that squeaked when it was squeezed, all ceased to engross the attention of the group. Only the child with the rag doll in her arms swayed her body back and forth, singing tunelessly to her nursling, as oblivious to Jimmy's presence as if he had still been in France.

This big, silent man, in an unfamiliar costume, did not impress all his observers favorably. The

yellow-haired baby who had been amusing himself with the Teddy-bear till the time of Jimmy's entrance put up his lower lip in a fashion which to the weather-wise of Babyland suggests squalls. The castle-builder, after giving Jimmy a long discriminating stare, turned his face in the opposite direction, blinking his eyes very fast. Two of the remaining babies, having looked the new-comer over, voiced their sentiments by lusty howls. And forthwith a whimper spread from one to another, as if it were the sentiment of the meeting to make it unanimous.

But one of the group had a mind of his own. Already he disdained to be swept off his feet by mob hysteria. He fixed his eyes on the tall, motionless figure with an expression peculiarly daring, and then suddenly his mouth widened in a roguish grin that revealed two infinitesimal teeth. The grin expanded. Dimples showed in the soft baby cheeks, and, above the noise of the crying, they heard his cheery chuckle. Captain Pendleton took a quick step forward and gathered the smiling baby into his arms.

At his elbow he heard Pollyanna's ecstatic gasp. "Jimmy, you're wonderful. The moment I told you to pick him out, I'd have given anything to take it back. I don't know how I could have borne

it if you had chosen the wrong baby. But how — how did you know?"

Holding the laughing child against his shoulder, Jimmy turned his glowing face upon her. "Why, it was easy," he boasted. "Look at the others and look at him. Why, he's started already, Pollyanna — hear him laugh, the rascal — started playing the game."

THE END.